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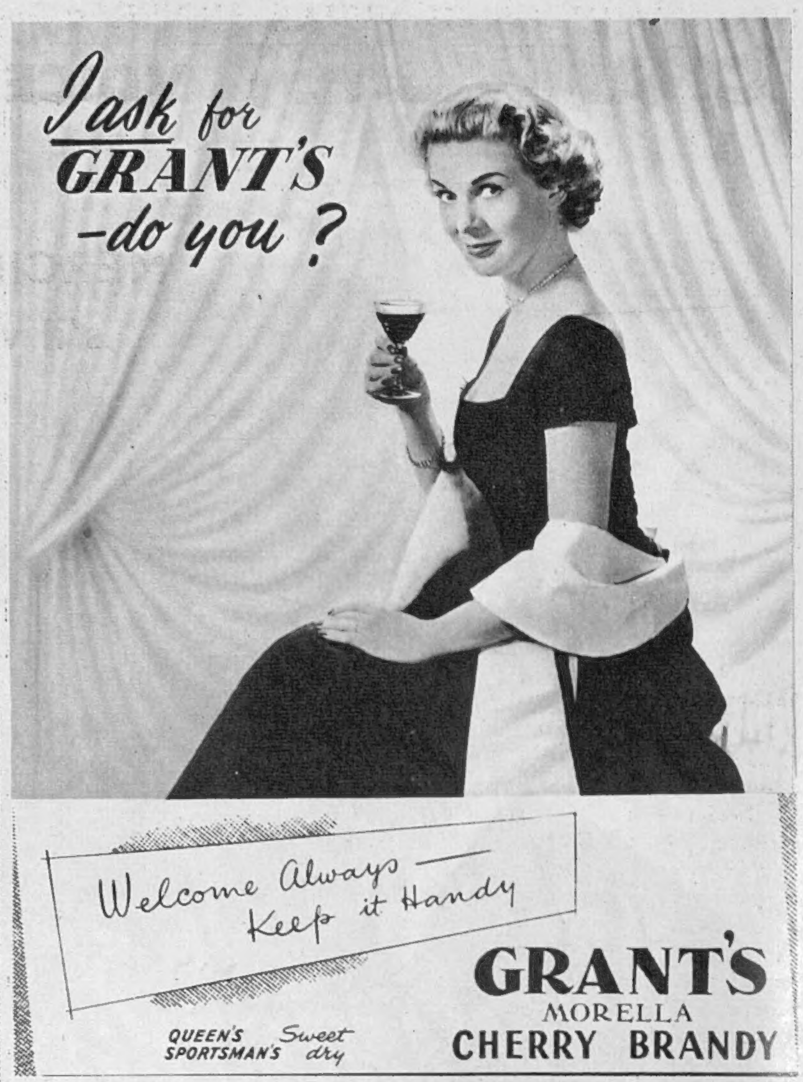
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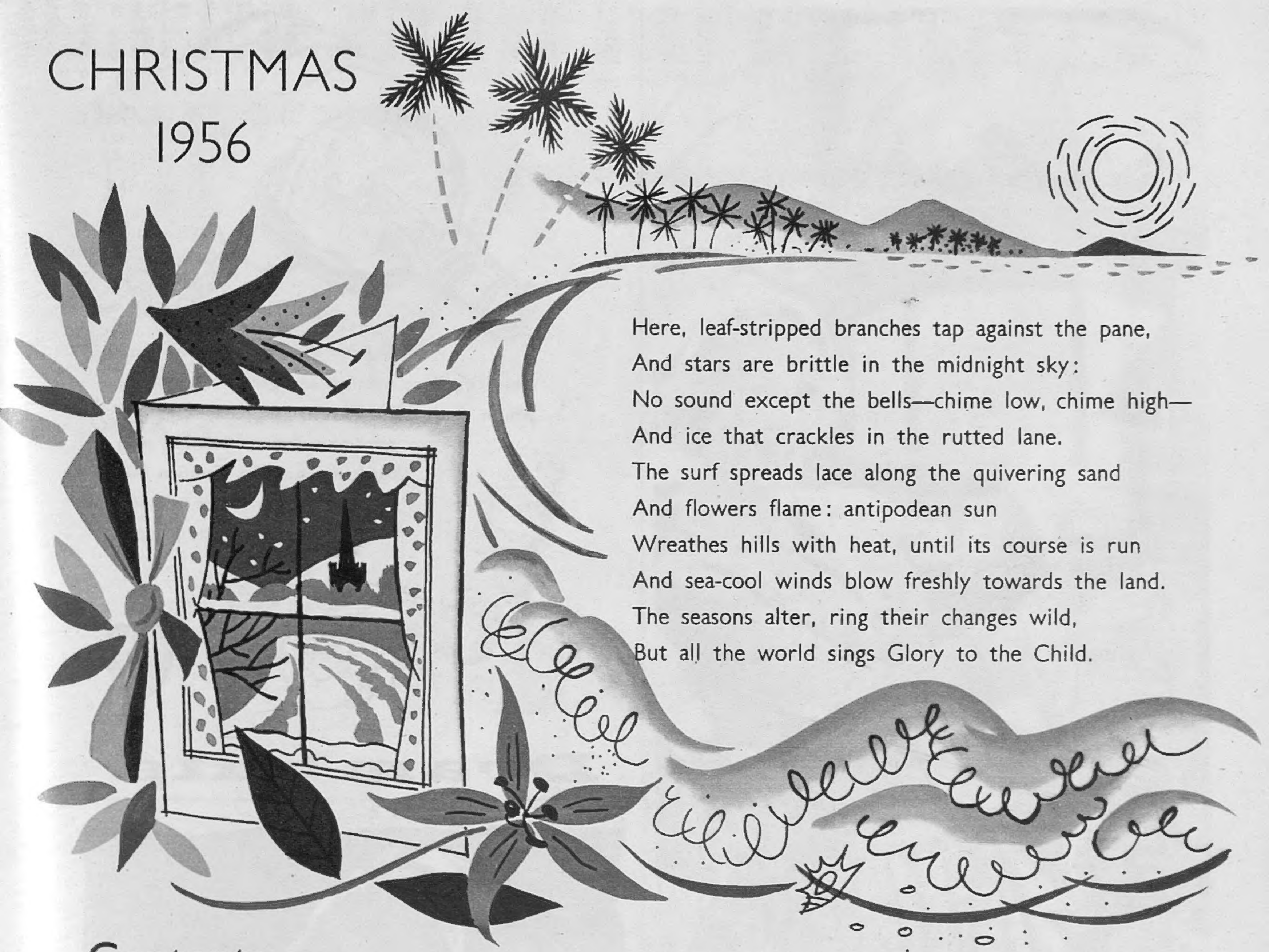

Here, leaf-stripped branches tap against the pane,
And stars are brittle in the midnight sky:
No sound except the bells—chime low, chime high—
And ice that crackles in the rutted lane.
The surf spreads lace along the quivering sand
And flowers flame: antipodean sun
Wreathes hills with heat, until its course is run
And sea-cool winds blow freshly towards the land.
The seasons alter, ring their changes wild,
But all the world sings Glory to the Child.

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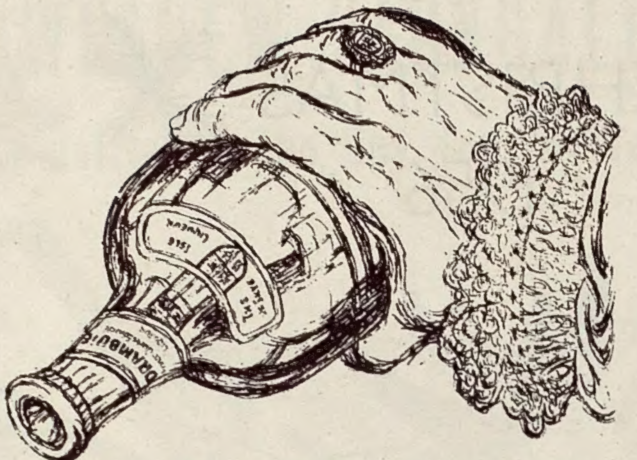

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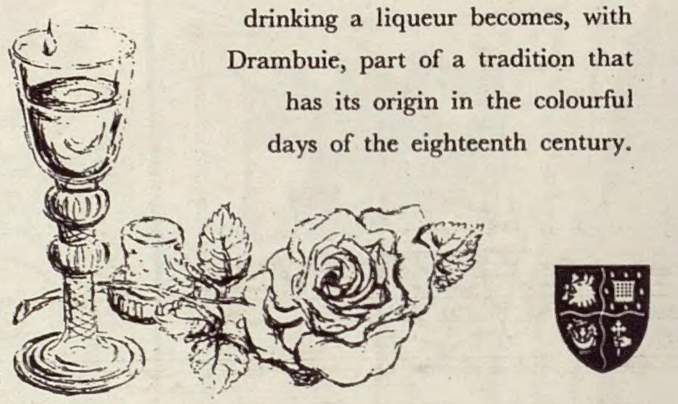

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Photo: Armstrong Jones

The Editor and Staff of "The Sketch" wish their readers everywhere a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

FROM THRACE TO CADIZ

Illustrations by Leslie Wood

Christmas is here:
Winds whistle shrill,
Icy and chill.

THERE has been many a mild, green Christmas in my time; indeed, the white ones have been very much in the minority. And yet when I think about Christmas the mental picture has all the conventional trimmings. So much for the power of tradition. Why do we yearn, in theory at least, for weather which normally, to be honest, we don't much like?

Snow and skates, mufflers and red noses, are all part of the picture. The fact that the same sort of weather tends to bring slush and burst pipes, chilblains and influenza, doesn't seem to matter. Thackeray (whom I quote above), Dickens, Irving Berlin—via Bing Crosby—and Raphael Tuck are, I suppose, in their ways and times responsible for the perpetuation of the "White Christmas" myth.

My encyclopædia flatly declares that "A Christmas Carol" presents the *true* spirit of Christmas; what it does, in fact, is illustrate the conventional, Western European sentimentalities. I remember the late Ian Mackay quoting a saloon-bar-orator friend of his as saying it would have been a good thing for every poor, harassed parent if Dickens had stuck to editing his newspaper and left Christmas where it was —"away somewhere in the Bavarian Alps." As usual, truth lies between the two extremes. In a changing world, our Christmas vision remains static and, globally speaking, parochial.

Our Own Ideas

Apart from an occasional gasp of astonishment when we hear of Australians eating their plum pudding with ice-cream on Bondi Beach in blazing sun—although we have known about the seasons and the hemispheres from schooldays—we still hold to our conceptions of what Christmas ought to look and feel like.

But Christmas goes round the world, having its manifestation wherever the Christian story has been woven into the fabric of life, and, oddly enough, in some places where it hasn't. Sometimes our insularity gives offence. It's not *proper* Christmas, we seem to say, unless it's *our* kind. We toast "Absent Friends," with the feeling that the poor souls can't *really* be having Christmas if they are not with us. Kipling had something of the sort in mind when he wrote, with harsh truth, in India:

High noon behind the tamarisks—the sun is hot above us—
As at Home the Christmas Day is breaking wan.
They will drink our health at dinner—those who tell us how they love us—
And forget us till another year be gone.

A Useful Exercise

A little mind-stretching about Christmas in other places might be a useful exercise. To jolt myself out of the rut, I asked a girl from Hong Kong what was the first thing that came to her mind at the mention of Christmas—and she said, simply, surprisingly and without hesitation, "poinsettias."

St. Chrysostom, fifteen centuries ago, wrote that celebrating the 25th of December was, even then, "a very ancient tradition," and he stressed the universality of Christmas by pointing out that the day was kept holy "from Thrace to Cadiz"—the whole world, as he knew it.

At first hand I know little of far-off Christmasses, and that for a reason which is part and parcel of our home-and-family sentiment, which is integral to the great festival. When I first lived away from home, and could afford to do so, I went abroad at Christmas; no farther than France, but I soon gave up even that.

As soon as I was married, there seemed no possible place to spend Christmas except in my own house, going out only to share the hearth of close friends, and being able to attend my own church at this zenith of its year. I still find it difficult to understand people who choose to go to seaside hotels for this of all holidays.

But other people's Christmasses fascinate me;

I imagine I would like to see them, though I know in my heart I would put up every resistance to being away from home.

I should like to see the bonfire ceremonials of Syria, where the gospel is read by the light of candles in the courtyard on Christmas Eve. The timeless story is read by the youngest child of the family who can read. Then the head of the house puts a match to the piled thorns, and, as they blaze, everybody leaps three times across the flames, wishing their dearest wish.

In the early morning other bonfires are lit, inside the churches, while the men chant what Freya Stark describes as "a wild swift Syriac hymn—the tongue in which legend says Adam lamented over the death of Abel." The flames leap half-way to the roof, then as they die away the procession starts, headed by the figure of the Infant Christ on a crimson cushion, and the service falls into the familiar Christian form, closely resembling High Mass. The Bishop gives the Pax—the touch of peace—to a member of the congregation who passes it on to the

Though Christmas rings the world, it begins and ends at home . . . by STEPHEN WATTS

worshipper next to him, and so on throughout the whole church.

The fire symbol crops up again far away, in a very different civilisation, in West Africa—where paganism, Mohammedanism and Christianity exist in amity side by side. The Nigerian child knows nothing about Guy Fawkes Day, but he knows and loves fireworks, which for him are part of Christmas. The missionary influence makes itself felt in somewhat incongruous ways; "Good King Wenceslas" is sung happily by people who have no notion of snow, "deep and crisp and even" or in any other form. Turkey is eaten and "open house" hospitality is the order of the day.

But vivid, tropical colour is the keynote of clothes and decoration, and the Christmas procession through the streets of a city like Lagos is in the form of a masquerade, led by a band playing in African rhythms which would sound to us more like jazz than Christmas music.

Battles of Flowers

The carnival note is repeated wherever the sun shines in December. In Brazil, Christmas is a midsummer event, with battles of flowers and picnic parties. Here the Anglo-Saxon influence has percolated via America, and Santa Claus, complete with sleigh and reindeer, has found his place in these sunny celebrations.

One purely religious custom I cannot trace elsewhere is an indispensable part of Christmas in Mexico. This is the *posadas*, signifying the journey of Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem, which begins on December 16. Nine families join together for this, and each night they meet at a different house, re-enacting the Holy Family's search for shelter. On the last night they are admitted and the first Christmas celebration is the singing of their thanks.

Hay for Santa's Horse

Nearer home the variations on the central theme are less marked, but they exist. Country children in the Netherlands, where Santa Claus originated, leave out their wooden shoes filled with hay for his white horse, not, you will notice in this case, reindeer. Incidentally, in Holland Father Christmas is traditionally accompanied by a black servant.

In Scandinavia the significance of the stable is stressed by the provision of special food for the animals, and presumably to prevent other creatures feeling under-privileged, bundles of grain are set up on poles in the farmyard for the birds. In Normandy, the children go out in bands along the roads to meet and greet the Three Kings.

For all the persecution of religion in Soviet Russia, Christmas has survived, and as the official attitude has relaxed a little, the churches are packed. A girl who was in Moscow one recent Christmas told me that when she went to midnight mass in a cathedral she was able to get in only because a special place had been reserved for the British Embassy party. There were no seats, and the congregation, many of whom had come from miles away, had been standing or kneeling in a tight mass for six hours or more. The crush, the heat of the candles and the incense made her so drowsy that she had to leave after an hour, lest she should faint. She regretted this, because the singing, she said, was the most magnificent she had ever heard.

The Russians, by the way, use the word *yolka* for their Christmas tree. The word comes from the same source as our *yule*. In old Norse it was *jol*, meaning feasting and revelry. This must be one of the oldest words in all etymology. It goes even further back than the origin of Christmas, for the Anglo-Saxon conquerors of Britain celebrated the feast of their All-highest Father God, Odin, under the name of *Ialka-tid*, from which it is a short step to *Yule-tide*.

So the more we explore abroad for variations of the Christmas theme the more the journey tends to bring us back to where we began, for Christmas rings the world and, going farther than charity, it begins and ends at home. ★★★

Illustrations by Alan Crisp

IT was a still June evening in the small Norfolk village of Aylsham. The year was 1620. Farmer John Gardiner, his only son Richard, and his wife Emma had just finished supper in the big kitchen and the maid Alice was clearing away. It had been a hearty meal and they had needed it, for all three had been working hard from dawn till the first stars.

The scullery door having closed behind Alice, Richard stretched out his long legs luxuriously and, glancing from his father to his mother, said, "I 've something I want to tell you."

"Then we 'll have a game of chess first, my boy ; it 'll clear the ale from our heads and let you think twice before you speak."

"I 've already thought a hundred times, and my head 's clear enough without chess."

His mother smiled. "Take no heed of your father's nonsense. Any excuse is good enough for his chess. What 's on your mind, son ?"

"Hold !" his father said. "We 'll smoke on it," and he went over to the dresser and brought back clay pipes and a tobacco jar. When their pipes were going well, he said, "Now what 's afoot ?"

"I 'm going to Leyden to join the Pilgrim Church. No, wait. Let me tell it all first

THE CONSTANT LOVER

by

NEIL BELL

This is the story of an enterprise: of the hazards of adventurous seas beyond which a new life—and a new land—beckoned. It is also the story of a man's triumph—and loneliness. . . .

and then you can argue if you want to. I didn't tell you, but when I was in London for Smithfield Fair I met Elder John Carver over from Leyden. He 'd come over to try to raise funds for the voyage to America. He said the Virginia Company was bankrupt but that he 'd met a rich merchant, Tom Weston, who 'd guaranteed to finance the voyage. The Church had already bought one ship, the *Speedwell*, and she was lying at Delfshaven; and Weston was negotiating for another, the *Mayflower*, lying in Southampton Water. Elder Carver told me that only about a gross of the members of the Church at Leyden were willing to make the voyage and risk the dangers and hazards of a settlement in America and that he was hoping to get recruits in England to make the number up to two hundred."

"And you said you would go?"

"That is right, Father."

"I have nothing against it, my boy, and I am sure your mother has not. If we were young enough we would come with you. Religious freedom is dead in England. If you are not a Laud's man (and what is that but a Papist under a new cloak?), then you are a rebel; and if you are a pastor the pulpits of England's churches are closed to you; and if you are just one of the flock then you are fined or clapped in the stocks if you refuse to conform. Our blessing will go with you. When do you sail?"

"That depends on another. I am going to ask Effie Deane to come with me as my wife." He laughed as his parents stared at him in astonishment. It was his father who spoke.

"If you think George Deane will allow his daughter to marry you, my boy, you should be in Bedlam."

"Why not?"

"Why not? Why not? First, a farmer's son is not good enough for the only child of George Deane."

"He is only a wheelwright."

"Talk sense, my boy. He is a master wheelwright; employs twelve hands and lives in a big house with half a dozen servants. But you might get over that hurdle. The other one you will not. Not in a hundred years. George Deane is a High Churchman and he 'd rather see Effie dead than married to a Puritan. That is his way of thinking and you will never alter it."

"We shall see."

"Effie is only eighteen, Dick," his mother said, "so even if you could persuade her it would make no difference."

"I am going to see Mr. Deane in the morning. I shall ride the roan and leave at dawn."

His father blew out a cloud of smoke. "George Deane has a waspish tongue and you have a hot temper, my boy. Take care. You don't want twelve hours in the stocks. It would soon get round and all the Laud riff-raff and the Papist rabble would make it hot for you. It would be as bad as the pillory and you 'd be lucky to get out with one eye and half your teeth."

Dick threw his clay into the hearth, drained his mug, and got out of his chair. He stretched his arms and yawned. "I 'll away to bed," he said. "Good-night."

IT was well after eight the next morning when Dick reached Dereham. George Deane considered himself as good as Quality and kept Quality hours and had but just finished his breakfast. He was strolling in his garden enjoying his pipe and was ill-pleased when a maid came running to tell him there was a caller for him. Being told who it was, he said testily, "Tell him to go away and come back later." As the girl was returning into the house he bawled, "Oh, tell him to come out here!" and he carefully lowered himself on to an iron garden seat, sitting back

(*Continued overleaf*)

and breathing heavily. His belly sagged over his thighs which were so fat that he could not cross his legs.

When Dick came he said, with reluctant affability, "Had your breakfast?"

"Not yet, sir."

"Then you had better go inside and get some."

"I 'd rather talk to you first, sir."

"Well, let 's hear it."

"I want your consent to marry Effie."

"Anything else?"

Ignoring the amused contempt in the harsh, throaty voice, Dick said, "I should want the marriage to be soon."

"And why?"

"Because I am sailing for the New World, sir."

"You are?"

"Yes, sir."

Deane let out a clap of laughter and then coughed and choked, thumping himself on the chest. He wiped his eyes on a huge yellow silk handkerchief and pointed his pipe-stem at Dick. "D'you mean you 're sailing with the Pilgrim gutter-sweepings? Bah! Don't tell me! D'you think we know nothing? Listen to me, Master Richard Gardiner. I 'd liefer see any daughter of mine in her grave than married to you. Hold your tongue, sir! I am told you like frank speaking." Again he gave his clap of laughter. "Freedom of speech! Freedom to worship! Freedom of thought! Freedom to preach sedition and treason! Well, here is a bit of frank speaking. A farmer's son isn't good enough for a daughter of mine. No, not if he farmed ten thousand acres instead of your father's paltry sixty. But if you owned half the kingdom and were a belted lord she wouldn't marry you with my consent. I am a King's man in religion and she is my daughter and that is enough and there is your answer. Now go in and get some breakfast. When do you sail?"

"Next month probably, sir. May I see Effie?"

"Of course you can see Effie. Think you 'll persuade her to elope with you? Try her." He laughed. "She knows me. I 've brought her up to fear God, honour her King and respect her father and his wishes." Again he poked the stem of his pipe at Dick. "Go and try, my boy."

"I shall ask her to come out to me when she is twenty-one. I shall wait for her."

"No harm in asking. How old are you?"

"Twenty-five, sir."

"Life doesn't seem to have taught you much in twenty-five years. But you will learn. And don't expect me to wish you a safe voyage. I don't. How many are going?"

"About two hundred, sir; in two ships, *Speedwell* and *Mayflower*."

"Well, my boy, if they go to the bottom of the Atlantic it 'll free the world of two hundred canting, snuffling, treasonable rascals. And that is straight and how you like it."

Effie was in the still-room, but she walked with Dick to the end of the narrow lane where he had tethered his horse. She was distressed and with difficulty kept back her tears. Yet she smiled at him as she said, "Poor Dick! Did you really think Father would agree?"

They had reached the end of the lane. The roan was cropping the long grass by the hedgerow. They stopped and faced one another. "I don't know, darling," he said, "miracles do happen." He took her in his arms and she clung to him.

Presently he said, "You will come when you are free?"

"Yes. If you will wait for me."

"I will wait all my life."

She broke down and cried and to comfort her he said: "I have brought you a posy ring. It was my mother's."

She took a thin, gold chain and tiny cross from her neck and gave it to him but did not speak. And then he took her in his arms again, held her closely and, turning away, mounted his horse.

She looked up at him, her cheeks wet with tears. "You will write to me?"

"By every ship that sails for England," he said. "Good-bye, my darling."

"God keep you." She stood watching him as he cantered away, turning again and again in his saddle to wave to her. Presently a bend in the road hid him. She remained there motionless as if reluctant to move. She looked at his gift. It was of silver and of no great value. She kissed it and then, with a catch in her breath, she turned and slowly walked back to the house.

AWAY in New England Dick, nearly a year later, wrote two letters. Both were dated March 28, 1621, and they were brought to England by the *Mayflower*, which sailed on her homeward voyage on April 5.

One of the letters was to his parents, giving them an account of his experiences; and the other, to Effie, ran:

My Dearest—Many, many times in the past months I have knelt down and thanked God that you did not sail with me. But let me tell you everything from the beginning. A week after we said good-bye I crossed to Holland in a wet little ship, the *Reliance*, and at Leyden was welcomed by Elder John Carver.

At the end of the month the whole Pilgrim Church went to Delfshaven, where our ship, the *Speedwell*, lay, the master Captain Robinson. She was a dirty little tub and the captain a villainous-looking, rat-faced fellow, and my heart sank as I thought of what lay before us.

We sailed from Delfshaven on July 22 with eighty Pilgrims aboard and a crew of twenty, while the quays and wharfsides were lined with all those who were staying behind, some cheering, others weeping quietly, but all waving hands or kerchiefs or shawls.

We were four days reaching Southampton Water and although the sea had been no more than choppy, the accursed *Speedwell* wallowed and rolled and wrenched her timbers into leaks and most of the Pilgrims were sick and the children crying, and I thought if we were going to face the perils of the great ocean in this wretched tub, then only by the miraculous help of God should we come safely to the other side.

In Southampton Water lay our other ship, the *Mayflower*, and the fifty other Pilgrims were already aboard her. Her master was Captain Jones, a decent Christian man, and God be praised he was, for he proved a tower of strength in the days ahead.

Repairs and caulking to *Speedwell* took several days and at dawn on August 5 we raised anchors and set sail, turning our bowsprits and our hearts to the west, where awaited us the New World and freedom. But hardly were we out in the Channel when *Speedwell* began to let water in a dozen places and by the time Portland Bill was fading astern we had made so much water that Captain Reynolds signalled *Mayflower* he was putting into Dartmouth for repairs and both ships anchored that night in the Dart, and we were there nearly two weeks before *Speedwell* was ready again for sea. She was now called by all of us *Leakwell*, but it was a wry-faced joke and no doubt we made it to keep up our hearts.

It was the 23 of August when we got away; but 300 miles west of Land's End rat-faced Captain Reynolds again signalled *Mayflower* and both vessels hove-to and Captain Jones came aboard for a conference, and the upshot was both ships put about and made for Plymouth, which we reached on the 27th, all cold, wet, miserable and many sick, for the weather had changed for the worse.

Five days were spent at Plymouth while repairs were pushed on with and then the rascal Reynolds declared he would not risk his ship on so mad an enterprise so late in the year, and after much argument and noise and shouting and confusion, we were half of us transferred to *Mayflower* with our goods and the stores for the voyage. The rest there was no room for. And God knows there was little room for us, and when at last on September 6 *Mayflower* sailed from Plymouth there were aboard 104 Pilgrims, the master, Captain Jones; the mate, Ben Godley (and no man ever more misnamed), and eighteen seamen. And packed we all were like salted pilchards in a barrel.

It was a hard voyage and many, many times, my dearest, I thanked God you were not with me to endure our sufferings. *Mayflower* leaked, and after the first few days no one bedded-down dry till the voyage was over. There was no room to move; the weather grew daily worse after October was out; all of us were seasick, and we were so much tossed about that many lay for days unable to move. But I will not write more of this to harrow you and frighten you. It was only because *Mayflower* was a tub and ill-founded and we so packed together.

Some of the sailors were evil fellows and the mate Godley was the most evil man aboard. He continually jeered at us and said he hoped we 'd all be drowned or if not drowned eaten by cannibals. He blasphemed and was foul-mouthed, and if he met women alone was lewd to them by words and gestures. I prayed he would try to molest a woman in my presence so that I might in God's name and for her protection thrash him, but he was careful, I being the biggest man aboard, to behave when I was about. But God took care of him, and on the last day of October in a storm he was washed overboard and drowned.

Yet although there were 29 women and 23 young children aboard we had but one other death, William Butten, manservant to Deacon Samuel Fuller. And by God's blessing that one loss was made good, for just before we anchored at Cape Cod Mistress Elizabeth Hopkins was delivered of a boy who was christened Oceanus.

It was on November 9 that we raised Cape Cod and we continued our course S.S.W. for two days but returned to the harbour at Cape Cod and dropped anchor and held a service of thanksgiving for God's many mercies, believing that all our troubles were over and that we had reached the promised land.

Alas, my dearest, they had but just begun. But I will not dwell on the dreadful winter and our sufferings and hardships. Early in the New Year the dreaded scurvy struck us as we laboured in the barren and icy wilderness to make the earth blossom and bring forth its fruits. Death has

Six hundred miles west-south-west of Land's End, "Griselda" was hailed by the schooner "Esmeralda," homeward-bound from Newfoundland, and returned the hail . . .

taken an awful toll of us, and as I write these words, of the 104 Pilgrims who sailed from Plymouth with such high hopes and full hearts, only 51 remain alive, there having died of the scurvy, or the flux or marsh fever, 34 men, 14 women (all wives), 4 boys and 1 girl. Yet with all our sufferings and our grievous losses we are in good heart and sure in the knowledge and faith that God who has brought us so far and enabled us to overcome such dire tribulations, will prosper us if we work and have patience and faith. We know that other Pilgrims will soon be on their way from England to join us and we expect their ships to reach the Settlement this Fall. I am in good health and full strength and have already staked out the land I am to cultivate and have built my small log house. When you come, there will be a larger and more comfortable one awaiting you. Write quickly, my dearest love. I think always of you and pray God to keep you safe and bring you to my arms at last.

THAT October the *Fortune* arrived from England bringing nearly 200 new Pilgrims and letters, parcels and gifts.

There was a long letter for Dick from his father, but no letter from Effie. When *Fortune* set sail again for England at the end of the month it carried another letter from Dick to Effie, telling her of his bitter disappointment in having had no word from her ; of his fear she might be ill ; and begging her as she loved him to write him a long letter by the next ship sailing for New England.

When the *Anne* arrived from England in April 1622 (a year after he had written his first letter) there was a letter from his mother, but from Effie no word. Before the *Anne* sailed for England Dick sought out one of the crew, a Norfolk man named Miller, and gave him a letter for Effie and five gold marks if he would promise to take it to her himself and give it into no one's hands but hers. Miller swore he would do this, but as soon as the *Anne* was at sea he threw the letter overboard and gambled and boozed with the money, knowing (what Dick did not) that *Anne* would not be returning to New England.

That October the *Little James* came from England with another 100 settlers ; a letter from Dick's father ; but again no word from Effie.

He wrote off at once to his father, begging him to go to Dereham and to see Effie and enclosing a letter for her, telling her how greatly he was prospering, begging her to write to him, and reminding her that in another six months she would be twenty-one and free to come to him, and that his heart was aching for the day of reunion.

When the small brig *Friendship* arrived from England in the following June there was a letter from his father saying he had gone to Dereham but had been unable to see Effie ; had been refused entrance to the house ; and when he had persisted in his efforts to see Mr. Deane, the dogs had been set on him and he had been badly bitten before he could make his escape.

Friendship was at New Plymouth a month before sailing for England and during that month Dick weighed the pros and cons of returning home to find out what had happened. What finally weighed the balance

(*Continued overleaf*)

down against the project was that his farm, now one of the largest and most prosperous in the Settlement, could not safely be left in charge of other hands and he knew only too well from the experience of the past three years how quickly neglected land went back to the wilderness from which it had been wrested by months and months of never-ending toil. But when *Friendship* sailed it carried another letter to Effie, a last appeal to her to write to him, if it were no more than to say she had changed her mind and was now not coming to join him. Even such bitter news as that, he said, would be kinder than this heart-breaking absence of any word from her.

To this letter there was again no reply when the brig *Charity* from England anchored in the harbour at New Plymouth in June 1624. There was a letter for him. It was from the Rector of Aylsham and it brought him sad news ; that both his mother and father were dead that February of a pestilence that had swept over England that winter, killing many hundreds of thousands. Grievous as the news was and fond as he had been of his mother and father, the blow it struck was scarcely felt because of the deeper wound and sharper pain he suffered now it was no longer possible for him to hide from himself the bitter truth that Effie had been faithless to her promise and that he would never again see her.

Yet he wrote once again, a despairing letter, which went by the sloop *White Angell* in November 1624.

There was no answer to this letter and he did not write again.

ALL his ties with home were now broken and he faced the hard fact and steeled himself to forget ; to think now of the New World as his only home ; and to bend all his energies to make his farm the most prosperous in the ever-growing community now numbering several thousands ; slowly and steadily spreading out over the countryside ; and in a hundred places building the first houses that would presently be the hamlets and tiny villages from which would grow the great towns and cities of the unborn years ahead.

He continued to prosper ; buying more and more land ; employing scores of hands ; and presently building a great house where there was no mistress but only servants. He was made an Elder of the Church and the Chief Councillor of his village, and it was generally believed he would be the next Governor of the Settlement.

In the early winter of 1640 he was taken ill with marsh fever and for weeks lay at the point of death, his mind wandering, strange, rambling, meaningless speech sighing out from between his blackened lips. In a brief interval of clarity he asked the woman tending him to take the gold chain and cross from his neck and give it into his hand, and for a long while he lay holding it against his heart. Then he asked her to replace it and to promise it should be buried with him if he did not recover.

But he was not to die, and in his long convalescence he was visited again and again by a great homesickness, an unbearable longing to see once more the familiar scenes of his boyhood. And behind that longing was a hope that perhaps, even after all these years, he might find Effie, or at least obtain news of her. And as soon as he was well again he set about putting his affairs in order and arranging for his passage.

WHILE he was busy with these affairs in the New World, over in the Old, in Antwerp, Jan Fyt, the famous Flemish painter of animals, had received one morning a letter from his English friend, Luke Shelton, a picture dealer in Fleet Street, London.

Jan called to his wife and when she came breathily into his workroom he cried gaily. " Listen, Old Puffer ! " and read :

DEAR JAN—I know you won't be bothered with portraits and think even equestrian portraits so much a waste of God's good time and a vanity of vanities withal, but Sir Charles Brenton of Framlingham, Suffolk, wants equestrian portraits of himself, his lady and his young son and daughter. And he wants them painted by you, Jan, and will pay a round three hundred gold marks for the honour. What do you say ? You will have to come over at once. I salute you and send warm greetings to your wife.

" Well, what *do* you say, Jan ? "

" I 'm going."

" But you hate painting anything but animals."

" Are not horses animals ? "

" But you 're not very good with their riders."

" But three hundred marks, my Dumpling. How can I as a true artist refuse that ? " He pinched her plump bottom. " Four things an artist loves : women, wine, tobacco and money. Bring the schnapps and we 'll drink to a happy voyage."

" I 've never seen London, Jan."

" You shall, Dumpling, you shall ; but not this time."

MUCH had to be done and foreseen and arranged before Dick could leave for England, so that it was not until June 1641 that he reached Southampton. The slim, rather boyish-looking young man who had sailed in the *Mayflower* twenty-one years earlier was now a heavily-built man with an iron-grey beard ; a face weathered and tanned ; and furrowed by hardship and sorrow.

He went straight to Aylsham. No one knew him and he did not reveal himself. He spent a day wandering about the village reviving his memories of the past, peering in at the window of the farmhouse where he had been born and reared. In a way he was glad he had not been recognised and yet it chilled his heart and he would have given much to have encountered a smile of greeting.

He took horse to Dereham and there, too, found no one knew him. He had gone there in high hopes, only to be bitterly disappointed. The Deanes had left many years before and none knew where they had gone. " Years ago they left Dereham, Maister, but where they went I can't say. Maybe Maister Foulkes down at Mill might tell you." Something like that was what they all said, so that he went from one house to another until he had spoken to nearly everyone in the village. No one knew anything about the Deanes. Or so they said. He began to suspect something was being hidden from him and became angry and charged one, the blacksmith, with lack of frankness, only to be received with a friendly yet blank look and a slow " I don't know what you mean, Maister."

He went to the Vicar and the darkness lightened a little. " It must be fully eighteen years ago since they left Dereham," the Vicar said ; " there was some domestic trouble but it was just before I came and I never got to the bottom of it. I wasn't really curious. What I did gather was that they left in no good odour. But it is odd that you should come to me about the Deanes. I am a canon of Norwich Cathedral and I was in the city a few days ago for convocation and there I met an old college friend, now the rector of St. Matthew's Church, Norwich, and he was in very good spirits because one of his parishioners had agreed to pay for the renovation of the altar screen and the roof. She was, he told me, a Mrs. Deane, a widow, and why he told me this, he said, was because she had once lived here."

" Was there anything said about a daughter ? "

" No, but as you are so interested I will give you a letter to my friend and he will no doubt give you the lady's address."

Four days later Dick called on Mrs. Deane. She did not recognise him but he thought her hardly changed at all. When he revealed himself she became much agitated and for a long time sat in silence as if she could not make up her mind. At last she said, " I will tell you everything, Dick. You have a right to know. I always liked you and would have welcomed you as a husband for Effie. You tell me she never wrote to you. That is true. She was waiting for you to write. Yes, I know, Dick, I know." She wiped her eyes. " Wait until I have told you. It is a sorry story. Month after month, year after year, went by and no letter came from you. It broke her heart. It turned her against life, against everything—even against God—so that she did not care. And she went astray. She let herself go astray because she no longer cared about anything, and I found out she was going to have a child. We could not keep it from her father and in his terrible rage and shame he turned her out."

Agitated and distressed, Dick said, " Where did she go ? "

Mrs. Deane shook her head. " I don't know, Dick. From that day to this I have had no word of her. When my husband died nearly ten years ago I found your letters to Effie among his papers. Why he had kept them who can say ? But there they were to witness to the wrong he had done her."

" Oh, my God ! " The bitter cry burst from him and he put his hands to his face.

Mrs. Deane touched his arm. " My poor boy ! " she said quietly ; and the years fell away from him and he felt himself a child again.

She wanted him to stay with her a few days but he would not. All he wanted to do was to get away, as if by doing so he could escape from the pain and the heartache. He must get away, away from everything which might remind him of his lost love and of the evil done by the dead man who had spoiled two lives.

He went up to London to see about a ship for America. He was walking along Fleet Street when he stopped to look into the

(Continued on page 53)

Riding in Rotten Row

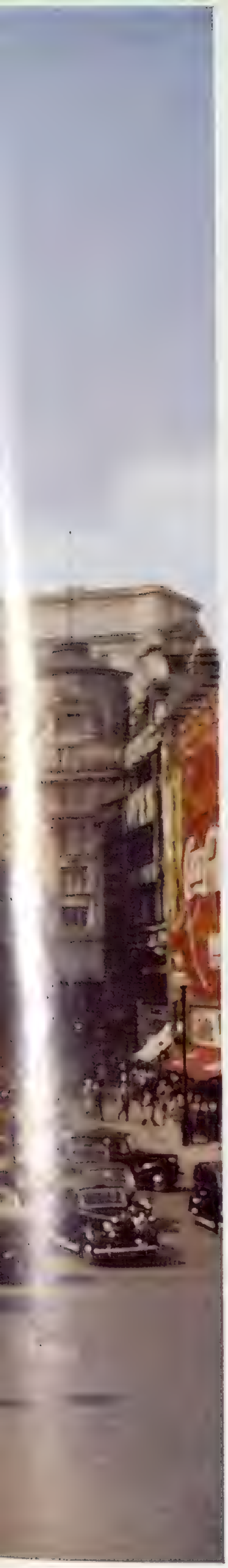
THE CITY WE LOVE

Winter or Summer, London is a pageant of diversity

"WHEN a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford," said Dr. Johnson. Dignity and squalor, calm and excitement, penny plain and tuppence coloured, they are all to be found if you know where to look. London is the most English city, and it is always full of foreigners; you can climb to the top of a bus in summer, keep your ears pricked, and hear five different languages spoken. "If you want to know the way, ask a policeman," was a saying coined in London, because only a policeman would know the way; it is the pride of Londoners to know the geography only of their own localities—a mews in Kensington or an alley near the docks. No pictures could show you all of London; it would take a book almost the size of London herself. But here (in photo-colour or water-colour) are some familiar scenes from the city we love.

Photograph by Panfocal Studios

The centre of the Commonwealth—Piccadilly Circus. It is said that, if you sit outside the Cafe de la Paix in Paris for long enough, the whole world will pass by; the same often seems true of standing on the steps of Eros.



Tourists goggle at an impassive sentry at the Horse Guards.

Children who want to know the time ask a policeman.

Wild-eyed orators gesture in the privileged atmosphere of Hyde Park's Speakers' Corner.

The fountains play in Trafalgar Square, with the spire of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in the background.

Photograph by J. Allan Cash

Flower-stalls are to be seen all over London in the summer.

Trafalgar Square is the home of what are probably the plumpest pigeons and photographers in the world.

. The annual pageant of the Lord Mayor's Show.

She was a Peeress of the Realm—and the whole village worshipped her.

HER LADYSHIP . . . . . . by C. HENRY WARREN

IT is scarcely an exaggeration to say that I adored her Ladyship. I was only a village boy at the time, and she was a Peeress of the Realm; but a child obeys no logic in choosing where he shall bestow his affections. Nor did it matter that I saw her seldom, and never, of course, spoke to her: she had my youthful heart in bond, and that was sufficient.

She lived at the Hall, a little way outside the village. That of itself was right and proper, for emphatically hers was no common clay, and it would not have been seemly for her to mingle freely with us. But sometimes she would come riding through the street in an open landau, with a cockaded coachman flicking his whip at the sleek horses, while a footman sat beside him, ready to jump down and open the landau door when her Ladyship had a call to make.

Perhaps I would be playing in the street with other children; but from the moment she passed by, serene and very upright in her seat, my delight was no more in hopscotch or hoops or leapfrog: I had my own secret happiness.

As it happened, my parents were on friendly terms with the head gardener at the Hall and also with the lady's maid. This meant that sometimes I was admitted to the very precincts. But if we were invited to take tea with Miss Mearson, the lady's maid, it was always when her Ladyship was away from home; and if it was Mr. Stock, the gardener, who invited us, he was always careful, when showing us round the gardens and greenhouses, first to make sure that her Ladyship was nowhere in sight.

Snatched Glimpses

Once, however, he made a mistake. We had been strolling through the kitchen gardens, where the evening sunshine glowed on mellow brick walls that were loaded with netted peach and pear and nectarine, and we had arrived at the little white door in the wall that led into the flower gardens and lawns surrounding the Hall. Mr. Stock lifted the latch, and we were just about to step through, when "Ssh!" he said, holding up a warning finger and hurriedly closing the door again, "There's her Ladyship!" But my quick eye had already caught a glimpse of her, strolling meditatively among the flowers, lazily twirling a silken parasol over her shoulder, alone with her thoughts and wholly unaware how a small boy in that moment had gathered her into a picture that would stay with him as long as he lived.

Another time, I remember, we had been taking tea with Miss Mearson, in her high room that looked out over the spacious park. Afterwards, she took us on a tour of the house. Her Ladyship was away, of course, so it was all quite safe. We were even shown her boudoir and her bedroom; but it was the drawing-room, with its chintzes and china, its silver frames and exotic flowers, that fascinated me. Snapping up the blinds from the long, Georgian windows, Miss Mearson showed us the many treasures, exhibiting them with a fondness that could not have been more proprietory if they had been her own.

And then, breaking my dream, I heard myself being called to come and look at something on a small table over which my parents were stooping. It was a pair of hands, wrought in alabaster and lying on an alabaster cushion. The slim, tapering fingers almost touched; the fragile wrists protruded from flounces of delicately sculptured lace, like stalks from their leaves. Said Miss Mearson: "They were carved when her Ladyship was only twenty-one—because her hands were so beautiful. For that matter, they still are."

The following Sunday I saw how true this was; for Sunday was the day when I could watch her Ladyship at my leisure, closer than at any other time. When she was in residence at the Hall, she never failed to attend our little village church, where she sat in a private pew beside the altar, in full view of all of us, but of none, I am sure, more adoringly than myself. When she was absent, the service seemed intolerably tedious. My bare knees ached on the wooden kneeling-rail; I thought the droning clergyman would never be done; and often my mother had to nudge me and whisper an admonition. But when I had her Ladyship to watch, the hour passed all too quickly.

On those occasions the service was, for me, more drama than worship. Even her Ladyship's entrance was dramatic. We would sit in our pews while the five-minute bell tolled and the latecomers sidled into their places. But I had eyes for none of them: I was waiting for the sound of a certain step—I knew it well—coming up the centre aisle. And then, just before the clock struck, it came. Advancing between the hushed and seated congregation, her Ladyship looked straight before her, as if she saw none of us, and slid into the family pew. Peeling off her gloves, she knelt down; and then I could see, as the slim, flashing fingers shrouded her face, that Miss Mearson had indeed praised those hands no more than was their due.

Even the incomprehensible sermon, on such a day, could not be too long for me; but at last the service ended and we filed out into the ordinary day again. But as we passed through the green baize door that led into the porch, I turned for one last look; and there sat her Ladyship, placidly waiting until we were all gone before she came out to her waiting carriage.

Her Ladyship Sings

She might sometimes move among us, but she was never of us; and I am sure there was nobody in the village who would have had it otherwise. Any closer contact, any hint of familiarity, would have spoiled the awe we held her in. We valued her for her rarity. We felt that she was somehow immune to the troubles that were our common lot, a creature deservedly favoured and set apart. With our awe there went something like love, and one and all would have agreed that nothing was too good for her. Which made the blow all the heavier when it came, as one day it did.

Every Christmas it was the custom in the village to hold a concert. It was billed as "A Grand Concert," and certainly it was the event of the year, anticipated by us for weeks. The chief thing about it was less the entertainment itself, most of which we had already heard many times, than the fact that her Ladyship usually attended, sometimes bringing a party with her. The front row of chairs was left vacant for her, even when Miss Mearson was her only companion; and, however late she might arrive, the concert was not allowed to begin until she was in her seat.

On this particular year, not only had her Ladyship announced her intention of being present, but she had actually promised to sing to us. We could hardly believe it. In fact, if the Christmas skies had opened to reveal a choir of carolling angels over the village, we could not have been more surprised and excited.

The Blow Falls

And then, less than a week before the concert, the blow fell. Like wildfire the news spread that her Ladyship's only son and heir had secretly married an actress.

Young as I was, the horror of it was plain even to me; for did we not all know very well that the stage was the haunt and home of vice? Admittedly we had read in the papers of other noblemen who had wed musical comedy actresses and the like; but this had happened in our midst. That her Ladyship should be called upon to bear such a humiliation was too much. It suggested that she was not, after all, immune from the vulgar woes of the rest of us. Something died in our village pride; and when her carriage passed with the hood up, we hushed our voices.

We did not care, now, whether the concert took place or not; for of course we assumed that her Ladyship would not attend, much less sing to us. But we were wrong. Certainly she would attend; certainly she would sing; had she not said she would?

So the evening came and we all trooped off to the school, more excited than ever. Never had it looked so gay, with holly and ivy and flowers from the Hall gardens; and never had my heart pounded so loudly.

Presently the door opened and her Ladyship entered, followed by Miss Mearson carrying a roll of music. The vicar led them to their seats and the concert began. But I for one had no ear for anything less than the great moment for which I waited. Pale and gently smiling, her Ladyship mounted the platform at last and Miss Mearson took her place at the piano. "Sally in our Alley" was the song that had been chosen; and no doubt much thought had gone into the choosing; but it would not have mattered what her Ladyship sang, for the song was secondary to the singing, and the singing—a little cracked; perhaps, more than a little faded—was secondary to the mere fact that she sang to us. That gesture of pride and dignity triumphant revived our fading enchantment: the village was itself again.

And as we walked home afterwards, under the bright stars, we wished one another a Happy Christmas—and knew, now, that we could indeed afford the wish.

★ ★ ★

" *PLEASE, Mummy, what 's it FOR—what 's a pantomime FOR ?* "

◇ ◇ ◇

Last year it was " Puss-in-Boots "—a buxom Puss in oddly inadequate boots. This year it 's " Cinderella." And Mandy 's six, now, and it 's so much more exciting to go to the theatre in the evening.

We could take Sal with us—the nice girl with the French sitter-in, one form up from Mandy. Sal sometimes takes Mandy back to tea, and though we darkly suspect it 's when she can't find an older girl to play with her, it 's nice to make some return. After all, it is Christmas, and Christmas comes but once a year—mercifully ! Maybe Sal's French sitter-in would like to come along too—good for Mandy's French. They say that Sal is practically bilingual already—ah, well !

Mandy will need a new frock, of course. But then she 'd have to have one for dancing-class next term, anyway. And it 's the Children's Party Season.

So we drove in to Poppleton and Edwardes, Mandy and me, Poppleton and Edwardes being the best that Fairingford can boast.

The steel-rimmed, pointed-nosed, scrawny-handed assistant looked at Mandy like Mandy looks at her nice sago pudding.

" One thing I will say—she grows quick." She said it !

We asked to see some party frocks. Mandy fell instantly and insistently in love with a highly unsuitable shocking pink velveteen. If you 're going to be that way later in life over your young men, Daughter Mine, you 'll be a great big bore !

" But, I say, old lady, it 's the colour of Brighton Rock."

" I like Brighton Rock."

" Show every stain," said Miss Scrawny-hands. I could have hit her.

" I *love* Brighton Rock," announced Mandy. Naturally.

" What about this madly-attractive sprigged cotton—so pretty—and so practical—and . . . I thought so—it 's Mowrockses, so it 'll wash like a dream—well, Mandy, what do you say, old lady ? " After all, *she* had to wear it.

" I say the Brighton Rock velvet—it 's scrumptious—just like Brighton Rock."

" It 'll crease," Miss Steel-rims glinted evilly. I could have slain her. That just isn't the way with Mandy.

" *You 've* got to wear it, darling, so you must please yourself."

" Wear ! " sniffed Miss Pointed Nose. " You won't get much wear out of *that*—it 's pulling across the chest already."

" If Mandy *likes* herself in it," I said, " back and front . . ."

While Mandy corkscrewed in the mirror trying to see her bright pink back, I tried to explain my theory of bringing up Mandy to Miss Lean-and-Hungry. " I agree with you," I said, " it 's a little horror. But we try never to say a downright ' no ' to them, nowadays—it makes them feel insecure."

" They 'll make *you* feel insecure if you don't," said Miss Tight Lips, tersely.

And, of course, one had to admit there could be something in what she says.

Mandy was a little angel-daughter on the drive back. Let 's face it—she 'd got her own bright pink way and was happily nursing it in a flowery cardboard box on her knees, taking constant peeps inside to make sure it was still there.

Does a child ever feel really, deeply secure ? It makes you wonder.

A PANTOMIME 'S FOR

Mandy had to have the best at Christmas-time—if only to make her feel secure.

That night, when it was hanging in the wardrobe, as bright and unsuitable as ever, with the door ajar so that the first—the very first thing Mandy would see in the morning was the Little Horror, Mandy gave me a great big hug. " I shall wear it all day and every day all of my life," she threatened. " Mummy, what is a pantomime FOR . . . ? "

◇ ◇ ◇

" Which pantomaime is it ? " Sal asked. " Ai mean, is it ' Puss-in-Boots ' again ? Because Ai didn't laike ' Puss-in-Boots '—*c'a ne me diser rien—mais rien* ! "

Bilingual.

" That was last year, Sal. This year it 's ' Cinderella.' "

" On aice ? "

" No—at Fairingford." We don't run to ice-shows at Fairingford.

" Last year," said Sal, " the Lumley-Joneses took me to ' Aladdin '—on aice ! *C'était épatant—mais é-pat-tant,*" she repeated.

So Sal could be tiresome too.

" We all drove up to Londres to see the show—I just adore Londres, don't you, Mrs. Abernetty ? "

And, of course, one has to admit that London shows have *got* something. Poor Cinderella-on-Fairingford-Hippodrome-Plank.

" Mummy " . . . said Mandy, later when I was putting away her toys—Mandy hates tidying up after herself. Besides, we 'd already had one kicking scene when I sent her off to school in her school uniform as usual instead of in that shocking pink nightmare, as the poor little soul had planned. Scenes are a sign of insecurity and I do so long for Mandy to be really sure of me . . . " Mummy, what is Londres FOR ? "

" It 's for Daddies and shopping and shows and . . . and so on."

" I shall wear my Brighton Rock velvet—*Braighton* Rock velvet—when we go to the pantomaime *à Londres*."

It 's wonderful how soon they pick a language up !

Illustrated by Kimpton

TAKING YOU TO

. . . by CARYL BRAHMS

" . . . But *Andrew*, by the time we 've taken the car into Fairingford and given the children a solid meal and ginned-up old Sal's sitteroo, we might just as well go the whole hog and take them up to Londres."

" To where ? "

" Londres—French for London ! . . ."

" Oh, you mean Londres ! . . . Pass the *pommes de terre*—French for spuds . . ."

I could have passed the hemlock. But there was too much at stake. Mandy's happy childhood—Mandy's clear-eyed confidence in the future—lay in the balance right there between us on the supper-table.

" Well, we can't afford *le Panto à Londres*," said Andrew. " Pass the pickles."

Old Sal 's been jolly matey with Mandy ever since the pantomime was mooted, and somehow Londres has come to be taken for granted by all concerned—excepting Andrew.

" The Lumley-Joneses took Sal to ' Aladdin-on-Aice ' last year, and . . ."

" Aladdin on what ? "

" Ice," I said coldly.

" Possibly Lumley-Jones can afford it," said Andrew every bit as coldly. " I can't."

Rings do hurt when one twists them round and round a finger.

" But, Andrew, don't you think we ought to *make* ourselves afford the same advantages for Mandy as the Lumley-Joneses do for Grace Mary ? "

" No, I don't. It 's no good bringing up Mandy to think she wants everything everyone else has—only leads to the divorce court later in life."

" Much later ! " There, now—and I hadn't meant to snap. " But surely, *surely*, we could pull-in on something else—or something."

" What, for instance ? "

" Well, Andrew, there *is* your golf club—round upon round of drinks, as though gin-and-bitters were water ! "

" And there *is* your bridge game—double here . . . re-double there . . . as though we had money to burn ! "

" That 's quite beside the point. After all, we both *agree* that even if we can't give Mandy all the advantages luckier girls get, at least . . . *at least* we can see that she gets off to a good start by giving her a thoroughly happy and secure childhood."

" And you think Mandy 'll feel thoroughly secure in Carey Street ? "

How hard can you bite words back ?

✧ ✧ ✧

So I sold some more War Loan. Well, anyway, Mandy 's making great strides with her Conversational French :

" But, *Maman, chérie*, what is a pantomaime FOR ? "

The ticket agency at Harridges was very high-handed—well, I suppose it *could* have been the long-distance line.

" Nothing, nothing at all, for pantos, ice or otherwise. Nothing for the circus, either. Nothing for Lettuce Love, the Lane or Cinerama. Nothing for anything, really—not for anything worth seeing. You 've left it very late this year, you see."

✧ ✧ ✧

" *Maman, chérie*, what 's a box FOR ? "

" Well, now, Mandy, *chérie*, it could be for sending things through the post . . ." Mandy shakes her head.

" . . . or it could be for . . . for bringing pink frocks home from shops . . ."

" *Les magazins*." Mandy shakes her head again. " *Non* ! *Non* ! *Non* ! "

" Could be for keeping secrets in ? "

" Could be—but isn't ! Ha, ha, ha ! " And this time the flying locks shake until the clip on the horse's tail into which we have been gathering our hair, of late, just like Sal does, comes right adrift.

" Very well, Mandy," I say, as I grope under the table, " you tell me . . ."

" Silly *Maman*—it 's for sitting at the pantomaime in—on aice—*everyone* knows that ! "

✧ ✧ ✧

But, even so, Harridges weren't very hopeful. " A box . . . well, there 's nothing for Fonteyn nights—or any other nights—and the Collodeum is booked right up till the middle of March—no Crazy Gang—no Airs—Fresh, Graces or Shoestring . . . We could try the outlying houses for you, in case there 's been a return on account of the weather . . ."

✧ ✧ ✧

In the train-*à-Kingston-sur-Thamis* I did what I could to put Sal's sitteroo in the pantomime picture.

Painstakingly, I laid bare the mystery of Principal Boy and Dame.

Marie-France turned those expressive blue eyes of hers on me.

" *Une spectacle pour les enfants*," she said. " *Sans blague* ? " she winked.

✧ ✧ ✧

And I must say the two little girls looked quite, quite ravishing sitting together in the stage box as good as a dollar bill, Sal in a pretty practical sprigged cotton that will wash like a dream, and Mandy in her hectic velveteen, carefully spooning their ices.

" *On dirait deux petits anges*," endorsed Marie-France.

And you know, it 's odd how even the strongest-minded child will take on colour from outside influences, for :

" *Maman, chérie*, can I have a cotton frock with little flowers, next year, just like Sal's," says Mandy ; and :

" Madame Abernetty, *chérie*, what is a pantomaime FOR ? " asks Sal braightly—I mean brightly . . . ★ ★ ★

THE CHARM OF GEORGIAN SILVER

The craft of the worker in precious metals has, through the centuries, provided some of the most exciting—and, fortunately, permanent—examples of man's creative powers. In this country the art of the silversmith reached its finest flowering in the Georgian era, and JOHN STEEL writes about its richness, its romance and its infinite variety.

Showing the influence of Meissen and Chelsea in its beautifully modelled figures, this candelabra, one of four made by Thomas Powell of London in 1759, is now in the restored Governor's Palace at Williamsburg, Virginia, U.S.A.

THE year was 1715, and in the Great Hall of a beautiful Elizabethan manor house in the West Country a small party of men who were ardent supporters of the Jacobite Cause were discussing the coming Rising which they knew was imminent.

On the table was a fine silver teapot ornamented with unusual strapwork decoration and delivered by its maker only that afternoon. For a moment or so the men broke off their conversation to admire it.

" Pentecost Symonds is a good silversmith," one of them said. " There will be plenty of work for him in the west once the Stuarts have claimed their own ! "

Not long afterwards, the ill-fated Jacobite Rising was ruthlessly crushed ; in the meantime, the great silversmith who rejoiced in such a Biblical name worked on in the calm of his Exeter workshop creating his masterpieces. Thirty years went by ; once more the Jacobite flag was raised by Bonnie Prince Charlie, with the west, as always, loyal to the Stuart Kings, but in the tragedy of Culloden many famous Devon families were ruined and their treasures, including Pentecost's teapot, passed into other hands.

Then came the second half of the eighteenth century, with George II seated safely on the throne. Riches flowed into England from India ; everywhere an air of prosperity and wealth was evident, and the Georgian silversmiths of the time fashioned silver plate of an especial beauty to please their aristocratic patrons.

Prominent amongst these alluring treasures was a glorious set of four candelabra of 1759 by Thomas Powell of London—one of them is shown on the left—which once shone in the candle-lit ballroom of a splendid house near St. James's, supposed to have been visited by Prince Charles on a secret journey to London whilst he was in exile in Rome. *(Continued on page 54)*

Ashmolean Museum

A pair of George I castors, engraved and with fine pierced-design, made by Louis Cuny about 1715.

This elegant George III silver coffee-pot, dated 1734, is probably the work of John Williamson, Dublin.

By Paul de Lamerie, this handsome helmet-shaped ewer is part of the Treby toilet set.

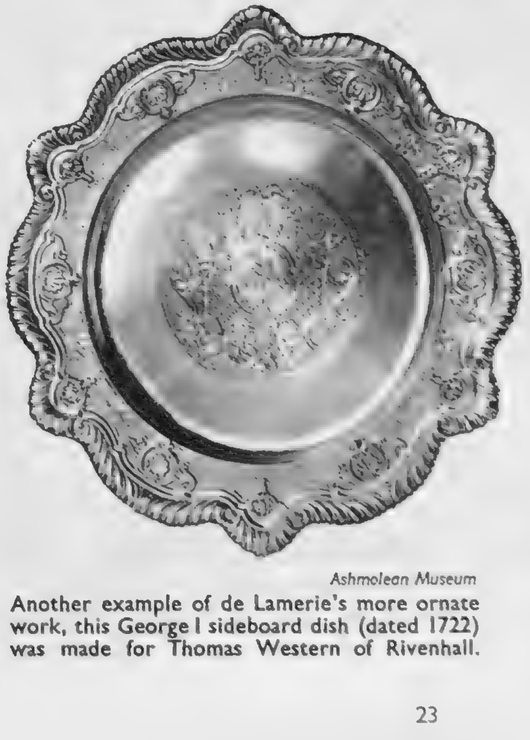
Ashmolean Museum

The George Treby Newfoundland Fisheries bowl, maker Paul de Lamerie. The engraving of a procession of the Company of Adventurers is attributed to the hand of Hogarth.
Ashmolean Museum

Ashmolean Museum

Deceptive simplicity in design gives this silver teapot (1735-36) by Paul de Lamerie a beauty of which one never tires.

Below:
Purchased for the Victoria and Albert Museum with the aid of a number of donations, this is the Newdigate centrepiece (hallmarked 1743-44), a masterpiece of the silversmith's art, by Paul de Lamerie.



Ashmolean Museum

Another example of de Lamerie's more ornate work, this George I sideboard dish (dated 1722) was made for Thomas Western of Rivenhall.

WHAT WAS THE THOUGHT?

"It isn't what it costs that matters," they say: "it's the thought behind it." But in some cases it might be wiser just to stick to the price!

by ANITA CHRISTOPHERSEN

NO matter how odd the present, we must remember that it is the idea of being thought about that counts. Of course it does. When we get a brilliant, rolled-gold brooch with "Mother" in sugar-ice writing on it, we put it away with a lavender-scented sigh of sentiment and treasure the thought, hiding the horrible deed as deep as possible. When dear, faithful Basil turns up with an imperfectly-wrapped pair of thickly-ribbed wool stockings, suitable for wearing under fishing waders, we know it is because he knows how much we feel the cold—and forgive him, while trying not to think of the rather saucy, lamb-lined boots we had very much hoped for.

Certainly with most of us, it is the thought which has to count, for no matter how much brain-scratching may have gone on, whatever it is that our friends, family and relations think we would like, turns out to be just tantalisingly wide of the mark.

There is something about present-giving which brings out the best—or the worst—in people. There are those who go about the business systematically and logically. They spend an evening thinking. They think of their friends and make lists. They imagine them in various and unlikely situations in which they might need . . . an ice-pick with a golf ball on the end ; a nail file which turns into a hair-grip ; or a sponge-bag which blows up and becomes a beach ball. The trouble with these people is that their thought runs away with them and the recipients will have to spend the better half of Christmas and the New Year getting themselves into the kind of predicaments demanded by the presents.

Father's Method

Then there are those who simply send for all the catalogues from all the stores. Men like this form of present-choosing. They get busy one particularly cold Sunday, when they should be out chopping wood or sifting coal, settle beside an enormous fire which they have stocked with a month's ration, put their feet on the chimney-piece (not the mantelpiece, of course) and their thoughts go like this :

Children's toys first. Nice-looking train there. Jolly good thing for young Mike. He 's old enough now to enjoy it—well, nearly, anyway, and I 'll be able to help him lay the lines. (That takes care of those endless hours on Christmas afternoon when food and festivity lie heavy.) . . . M-m . . . might have the bigger set with the station, *and* the level-crossing, too. Of course, to get the feel of the thing one really needs two trains—Mike could work one and I 'd do the other. Yes—good idea, that.

From then on he rushes through the pages, marking a rather well-sketched Russian bear cub for Avril, skipping the jewellery quickly as being expensive nonsense, and not what dear old Betty would want at all. She wants something to help her. Yes, that 's it, something really useful, like this toaster which times the bread and pops it up three different shades of brown. Betty never could make toast without burning it—jolly good idea. And poor Betty was longing for a perfectly useless gilt bracelet. On to garden tools next—now there 's something. I 'll just mark the wheelbarrow and the clipping shears. Betty 's sure to want to know what to give me. And for the rest—you can't do better than a book really—must get my secretary to get some tokens . . .

And that is Father's Yuletide made safe and his year's gardening made easier. The thought here is lucid and direct.

From the Back of Beyond

All of us must have some corner of our dwellings dark with the exotic "thoughts" which Christmas after Christmas have come by hand, rail and post from our Eccentric Cousin. Eccentric cousins are nearly always travellers and believe in bringing back trophies from their various sorties, which they salt away until Christmas comes round. Then out with the Maori spear for Uncle Tom, the Inca's ashtray for John (who has given up smoking) and the slightly yellowing yards of hand-made seaweed lace from one of the more backward islands in the South Seas for Mary. Poor Mary will have to spend terrible hours missing television while she sews it on to the back of pillow-slips rather than waste it.

Occasionally one's whole Christmas is cast into a whirlpool of wonder by a large, hollow, rectangular, wooden object which might perhaps be an Oriental log-box or a deposed chieftain's tom-tom. One of the fascinations, if one had time for it, is working out quite what the thought was behind these gifts—other than It Might Come in Useful in a Crisis.

Most worrying are the more commercial kind of thoughts which exist behind some presents. If, for instance, we get a handsome consignment of potting plants from Desmond next door, is that a rather charming gesture because he has borrowed our lawn-mower and our advice so consistently through the summer? Or is it an insurance for the same service in the coming year? Perhaps such base thoughts should never cross our minds, but they do when we realise that we have sent him a cheap but handy book called "The Compleat Gardener."

There are times, too, when we do wonder if the thought behind the present isn't a little pointed. For instance, is there some inner meaning to the fact that Stella consistently sends us a scarf, or a lampshade or a bed-jacket in a particularly strange shade of green? Is it because she has noticed we never wear green and she feels it might do something for us, like casting a shadow over our gathering wrinkles, double chin or difficult complexion? Or does she so hate our own colour schemes that she intends gradually and systematically to bring us into line with her own? Then we women are sometimes forced to wonder if the thought behind our husband's choice of gargantuan cardigans, gloves, slippers or dressing-gown is that they think we have become outsize without knowing it. Or do they just believe all wives automatically get huger and huger every year?

One is irresistibly reminded sometimes, too, of those old-time admonitory presents from the more austere members of the family. Like the painted sweet-tin waste-paper basket from Great Aunt Maud. She had come to stay just after we 'd moved to a new house and hadn't furnished the spare room with that necessary equipment. And the elaborately coloured tea-cosy from Granny reminds us with sorrow that she always likes her teapot wrapped up—and we never even found an old piece of felt to make her feel at home.

Memories for Our Keeping

Most touching are the thoughts behind the children's presents. The carefully-made miniature garden in an old mixing bowl, with little pebbles from the sea and a withering piece of fern from some excited expedition—all speaking of days of pleasure now offered to us for safe keeping. And the unevenly-sewn stocking bag made from a begged remnant of a summer frock, now dotted with pin-pricks of blood and reminding us of the many evenings we have been rebuffed with a tensely concentrating back-view and a firm explanation that she was "doing some difficult homework." These, and the little hand-worked bookmark made by the stiff old fingers of a beloved old dear who used to make our childhood party frocks—these are the things which shame any other thoughts behind our presents and which mount into the richness and the warmth of Christmas wishes. ★ ★ ★

Photograph by Tony Armstrong Jones.

All the joy of this—and every—Christmas is to be seen in the innocent, wondering gaze of a child. . . .

THEY WERE COFFEE HOUSES THEN

In the old days, they kept husbands sober and solvent, while wives drank tea at home.

by ALAN IVIMEY

Illustrated by Geoffrey Salter

THE fragrance of hot coffee greeting you in the street upon a cool morning; the pleasant itch to hear and to tell the latest news or story or scandal—that was what the London Coffee Houses meant for 150 years. They were the bane of boredom and the warm bond of brotherhood.

The difference between a Coffee House and a modern café lies in the all-important fact that the Coffee House patrons, each at his own special rendezvous, had a reason for meeting. They had some common interest and the ability to talk. When, towards the end of the eighteenth century these establishments became popular and crowded with folk who just wanted to drink coffee, the older patrons departed to form the beginnings of the West End Club.

What divides us from Coffee House London is not only time but an idea of living. Until the end of the period London had the atmosphere of what we should call a country town because fields and farms and country life were so close about it. From the Thames to the northern outskirts was but fifteen minutes' walk. And the river, chief highway from Westminster to the City, was wider, slower and much less muddy. It was the sort of river you would go boating on.

In other words, London was not a vast, characterless mass of houses with a few official buildings in the middle for tourists to look at but a place with individuality. And the Coffee Houses were a part of that individuality.

The Coffee House of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a man's place, and the coffee was nearly always served by an attractive woman.

When Coffee Arrived

Coffee came to England during that eleven years' pause in our affairs between the chill thrill of cutting off King Charles' head one January morning and the May Day revel of welcoming royalty home again in the saturnine person of his son. It was during that significant pause when we were deciding that we would have no more autocrat monarchs on the one hand, nor Big Brother Cromwells on the other, that coffee came among us with delicious influence upon London's crowded streets.

"Coffee and Commonwealth came in together," as they used to say. And all over the town the smell of roasting coffee beans began to waft a bland influence upon Puritanical dissensions.

Men sat down at tables and talked: and coffee, however hot, is never violent.

The drink itself seems to have been introduced into England by a London merchant who had lived out in European Turkey and had acquired the taste. On returning home he brought with him a young man from Dalmatia to make coffee for him and set up the lad in a little business to sell it. This he did at first in a kind of shack in St. Michael's churchyard on Cornhill. And he issued a little pamphlet for customers headed *The Vertue of the Coffee Drink*, in which it was stated that "The Grain or Berry called Coffee groweth upon little trees only in the deserts of Arabia."

The new drink soon began to be popular, especially as its price was modest, and within five years we find the first advertisement of coffee in a newspaper. This was *The Publick Adviser* and the announcement said:—

In Bartholomew Lane on the back side of the Old Exchange, the drink called Coffee, which is a very wholesome and Physical drink, having many excellent virtues. Closes the orifice of the stomack, fortifies the heat within, helpeth Digestion, quickeneth the spirits, maketh the heart Lightsome,

and so on and so on.

In Pepys' Diary

Mr. Samuel Pepys, who started to keep that wonderful diary of his in January 1658, when he was twenty-seven, had hardly been at it more than a fortnight before he mentions The Coffee House in Palace Yard. It must have been quite close to the site where Big Ben stands now and within sound of the lapping river and the scores of watermen who waited for hire at Westminster Stairs.

Here met the Rota Club who were members of the Republican Party and anti-Cromwell. The house was called Miles' (from the owner) of The Turk's Head, and its particular feature was a big oval table round which the patrons sat, with a sort of gangway cut through the wood so that Miles could serve the coffee, though it was no hotter than the arguments that went on.

They were highly serious arguments, so much so that they were settled at the end of each session by those present slipping a vote "for" or "against" into a ballot box, said to be the first ever seen in this country.

It was almost a club, for although anyone could come in and call for coffee, the special table was kept for the regular customers. They called themselves The Rota because of a scheme they promoted for changing a certain number of Members of Parliament annually by rotation.

This place and its imitators played a great part in the terrific whispering campaign which culminated in the decision to restore the monarchy in 1660.

After one very short-lived attempt to suppress Coffee Houses—Charles II was pretty good at gauging public temper—they multiplied steadily. Five years after the start of the new reign, the Great Plague emptied the town of all who could go. And the next year came the Great Fire, wiping out 13,000 houses and eighty-seven parish churches between the Tower and Temple Bar. The streets had to be marked out with posts among the ruins which went on smouldering for six months. And then London began to rise again.

Professional Coteries

One of the Coffee Houses which survived was the Rainbow in Fleet Street. But most of the Strand and Covent Garden had escaped and the literary and professional coteries began to be famous at places like Will's at the corner of Bow Street and Russell Street, and soon Coffee Houses were spreading through Charing Cross to the new suburb round Piccadilly and St. James's.

And what were these London Coffee Houses like, which remained a vogue for 150 years—first in the City, then spreading along the Strand to the Covent Garden suburb, built just before the Civil War, and then to St. James's, built just after it?

Though the first few of them existed just before the Great Fire which wiped out half-timbered London (Shakespeare's London), most of them flourished in the more ordered, neater, brick London, whose faded remnants, in rectangularly planned streets, you still see in Soho.

Well, your Coffee House, whether it were the Grecian in Devereux Court, Will's in Bow Street, The British in Cockspur Street or the

([illegible] Tree in St. James's, whether it was in m[illegible] street or alley, was likely to be part of a ro[illegible] of terrace houses saved from dullness by th[illegible] erfect proportions of its windows, the car[illegible] d or moulded doorways and the wrought iron[illegible]ork and heraldry of the painted signs.

[illegible] re would almost certainly be bow windows whose sashes and jambs and lintels were most satisfying pieces of carpentry.

Inside there was what a cold- and draught-fearing generation liked, a really glorious fug. A fire purring with heat, the sweet cheer of hot coffee and hot chocolate and blue mushrooms of tobacco smoke among the stout rafters. Sometimes, in the smaller places, there were stairs to climb. The larger establishments had two floors or more.

Intimacy and Privacy

In early days the room was just furnished with tables and chairs. Later, and especially in the City, at The Marine Coffee House, or Tom's, both in Birchin Lane, high-backed settles kept each table separate from the next and helped towards intimacy and privacy.

On the walls would be news-sheets, notices of auctions or of articles lost, descriptions of highwaymen or other criminals, ballads and every sort of medicine and cure. There would be a small bar with the buxom hostess or, better still, her daughter. And small boys in shirt and breeches hurried from table to table with a jug to fill the cups. They usually had no handles. On a huge hob before the fire bigger jugs of coffee kept hot and there would be a fat iron or copper kettle hanging over the flames.

Everything spelt ease and informality and the sense of being among friends in an accustomed place of comfort. Men of like tastes always knew where to go for congenial company. The writers had various rendezvous. Dryden held a sort of court at Will's, and young men would come miles to take a pinch of snuff from his very own silver box. In a later age Garrick and Sheridan and Thomas Gray, of The Elegy, and the tragic boy Chatterton, would be seen at Tom's. The Scotsmen met at The British in Cockspur Street. The doctors and surgeons went to Garraways in Change Alley, off Cornhill, the Army officers to The Tiltyard, off Whitehall.

There were special houses, like the St. James's, for Whigs and, for their Tory opponents, The Cocoa Tree and Whites in St. James's Street. There were Coffee Houses for Jews, for actors, for merchants, for almost every sort of educated man.

And the price of a cup was twopence or less.

The Wives Drank Tea

What a blessing all this was for their wives. For a husband could thus let off steam and talk about *things* as men love to do—politics or the latest duelling trick or some strange invention, or the news from America or how to catch a carp with cheese paste. They spent very little, and they came home with clear heads and in a cheerful humour. They had something amusing to tell their wives, too.

The wives in the meantime had been drinking tea as hard as they could with other wives, and they also had had an amusing time.

We could do with some Coffee Houses just like that nowadays.

The final end to the Coffee House came when big public gardens like Vauxhall, Ranelagh or Marylebone were opened and also the Tea Gardens further out on the growing suburban perimeter—like the White Swan in Bayswater or the Eyre Arms in St. John's Wood. Women were admitted and, however charming this might be for young lovers, this was the end of something, inexpensive and satisfying, which kept husbands happy. ★ ★ ★

Two Songs of

I Sing of a Maiden

I sing of a maiden
That is matchless;
King of all kings
To her son she chose.

He came all so still:
There his mother was,
As dew in April
That falleth on the grass.

He came all so still
To his mother's bower,
As dew in April
That falleth on the flower.

He came all so still:
There his mother lay,
As dew in April
That falleth on the spray.

Mother and maiden
Was never none but she;
Well may such a lady
God's mother be.

Christmas

As Joseph Was A-Walking

As Joseph was a-walking,
He heard an angel sing,
"This night shall be born
Our heavenly king.

"He neither shall be born
In house nor in hall,
Nor in the place of Paradise,
But in an ox's stall.

"He neither shall be clothed
In purple nor in pall,
But all in fair linen
As wear babes all.

"He neither shall be rocked
In silver nor in gold,
But in a wooden cradle
That rocks on the mould.

"He neither shall be christened
In white wine nor in red,
But with fair spring water
With which we were christened."

Illustrations by Osborne Robinson

And now the handsome woman in evening dress was singing, and the rest were hushed to listen . . . more and more as she sang it was as if a broad knife turned round and round in his heart, scooping it away. . . .

THE WAITING-ROOM

A ghost story with a difference. The waiting-room on the lonely station had once been something much grimmer.

by ROBERT AICKMAN

AGAINST such interventions of fate as this, reflected Edward Pendlebury, there was truly nothing that the wisest and most far-sighted could do ; and the small derangement of his plans epitomised the larger derangement which was life. All the way from Grantham it had been uncertain whether the lateness of the train from King's Cross would not result in Pendlebury missing the connection at York. The ticket inspector thought that " they might hold it " ; but Pendlebury's fellow-passengers, all of them business men who knew the line well, were sceptical, and seemed to imply that it was among the inspector's duties to soothe highly-strung passengers. " This is a Scarborough train," said one of the business men several times. " It 's not meant for those who want to go farther north." Pendlebury knew perfectly well that it was a Scarborough train : it was the only departure he could possibly catch, and no one denied that the time-table showed a perfectly good, though slow, connection. Nor could anyone say why the express was late.

It transpired that the connection had not been held.

" Other people want to get home besides you," said the man at the barrier, when Pendlebury complained rather sharply.

There were two hours to wait; and Pendlebury was warned that the train would be very slow indeed. " The ' milk-and-mail,' we call it," said his informant.

" But it does go there ? "

" In the end."

Already it was late at night, and the refreshment room was about to close. The uncertainty regarding the connection had made Pendlebury feel a little sick ; and now he found it difficult to resume reading the Government publication the contents of which it was necessary for him to master before the next day's work began. He moved from place to place, reading and re-reading the same page of technicalities : from a draughty seat under a light to a waiting-room and, when the waiting-room was invaded by some over-jolly sailors, to the adjoining hotel, where his request for coffee seemed to be regarded as insufficient.

In the end it was long before the train was due when he found his way to the platform from which his journey was to be resumed. A small but bitterly cold wind was now blowing through the dark station from the north ; it hardly sufficed to disturb the day's accumulation of litter, but none the less froze the fingers at a touch. The appearance of the train, therefore, effected a disproportionate revival in Pendlebury's spirits. It was composed of old stock, but none the less comfortable for that ; the compartment was snugly heated, and Pendlebury sat in it alone.

The long journey began just in time for Pendlebury to hear the Minster clock clanging midnight as the train slowly steamed out. Before long it had come to rest again, and the bumping of milk-churns began, shaking the train as they were moved, and ultimately crashing, at stately intervals, to the remote wayside platforms. Observing, as so many late travellers before him, that milk seems to travel from the town to the country, Pendlebury, despite the thuds, fell asleep, and took up the thread of anxiety which he so regularly followed through the caves of the night. He dreamed of the world's unsympathy, of projects hopefully begun but soon unreasonably overturned, of happiness filched away. Finally, he dreamed that he was in the south of France. Although he was alone, it was beautiful and springtime ; until suddenly a bitter wind descended upon him from nowhere, and he awoke, hot and cold simultaneously.

" All change ! "

The door of the compartment was open, and a porter was addressing him.

" Where are we ? "

" Casterton. Train stops here."

" I want Wykeby."

" Wykeby 's on the main line. Six stations past."

" When 's the next train back ? "

" Not till six-thirty."

The guard had appeared, stamping his feet.

" All out, please. We want to go to bed."

Pendlebury rose to his feet. He had cramp in his left arm, and could not hold his suitcase. The guard pulled it out and set it on the platform. Pendlebury alighted and the porter shut the door. He jerked his head to the guard, who clicked the green slide of his lantern. The train slowly steamed away.

" What happens to passengers who arrive here fast asleep ? " asked Pendlebury. " I can't be the first on this train."

" This train 's not rightly meant for passengers," replied the porter. " Not beyond the main line, that is."

" I missed the connection. The London train was late."

" Maybe," said the porter. The northerner's view of the south was implicit in his tone.

The train could be seen coming to rest in a siding. Suddenly all its lights went out.

" Casterton is quite a big place, I believe ? "

" Middling," said the porter. He was a dark-featured man, with a saturnine expression.

" What about a hotel ? "

" Not since the Arms was sold up. The new people don't do rooms. Can't get the labour."

" Well, what *am* I to do ? " The realisation that it was no business of the porter to answer this question made Pendlebury sound childish and petulant.

The porter looked at him. Then he jerked his head as he had done to the guard and began to move away. Picking up his suitcase (the other hand was still numb and disembodied), Pendlebury followed him. Snow was beginning to fall, not in flakes but in single stabbing spots.

The porter went first to a small office, lighted by a sizzling Tilley lamp, and heated to stuffiness by a crackling coke stove. Here he silently performed a series of obscure tasks, while Pendlebury waited. Finally he motioned Pendlebury out, drew the fire, extinguished the light, and locked the door. Then he lifted from its bracket the single oil lamp which illuminated the platform and opened a door marked " General Waiting-Room." Once more he jerked his head. This time he was holding the light by his dark face, and Pendlebury was startled by the suddenness and violence of the movement. It was a wonder that the porter did not injure his neck.

" Mind you, I 'm not taking any responsibility. If you choose to spend the night, it 's entirely your own risk."

" It 's not a matter of choice," rejoined Pendlebury.

" It 's against the regulations to use the waiting-rooms for any purpose but waiting for the company's trains."

" They 're not the company's trains any more. They 're supposed to be *our* trains."

Presumably the porter had heard that too often to consider it worth reply.

" You can keep the lamp while the oil lasts."

" Thank you," said Pendlebury. " What about a fire ? "

" Not since before the war."

" I see," said Pendlebury. " I suppose you 're sure there 's nowhere else ? "

" Have a look if you want to."

Through the door Pendlebury could see the drops of snow scudding past like icy shrapnel.

" I 'll stay here. After all, it 's only a few hours." The responsibilities of the morrow were already ranging themselves around Pendlebury, ready to topple and pounce.

The porter placed the lamp on the polished yellow table.

" Don't forget, it 's nothing to do with me."

" If I 'm not awake, I suppose someone will call me in time for the six-thirty ? "

" Yes," said the porter, " you 'll be called."

" Good-night," said Pendlebury. " And thank you."

The porter neither answered, nor even nodded. Instead, he gave that violent twist or jerk of his head. Pendlebury realised that it must be a twitch ; perhaps partly voluntary, partly involuntary. Now that he had seen it in the light, its extravagance frightened him.

(*Continued overleaf*)

Going, the porter slammed the door sharply ; from which Pendlebury deduced also that the lock must be stiff.

AS well as the yellow table, the waiting-room contained four long seats stoutly upholstered in shiny black. Two of these seats were set against the back wall, with the empty fireplace between them ; and one against each of the side walls. The seats had backs, but no arms. There were also two objects in hanging black frames : one was the address of the local representative of an organisation concerned to protect unmarried women when away from home; the other a black-and-white photograph of the Old Bailey, described, Pendlebury observed, as the New Central Criminal Court. Faded though the scene now was, the huge, blind figure which surmounted the dome still stood out blackly against the pale sky. The streets were empty. The photograph must have been taken at dawn.

Pendlebury's first idea was to move the table to one side, and then bring up one of the long seats so that it stood alongside another, thus making a wider couch for the night. He set the lamp on the floor, and going round to the other end of the table, began to pull. The table remained immovable. Supposing this to be owing to its obviously great weight, Pendlebury increased his efforts. He then saw, as the rays of the lantern advanced towards him across the dingy floorboards, that at the bottom of each leg were four L-shaped metal plates, one each side, by which the leg was screwed to the floor. The plates and the screws were dusty and rusty, but solid as a battleship. It was an easy matter to confirm that the four seats were similarly secured. The now-extinct company took no risks with its property.

Pendlebury tried to make the best of a single bench, one of the pair divided by the fireplace. But it was both hard and narrow, and curved sharply upwards to its centre. It was even too short, so that Pendlebury found it difficult to dispose of his feet. So cold and uncomfortable was he that he hesitated to put out the sturdy lamp. But in the end he did so. Apart from anything else, Pendlebury found that the light just sufficed to fill the waiting-room with dark places which changed their shape and kept him wakeful with speculation. He was, too, beginning to be obsessed with the minor question of how long the oil would last.

With his left hand steadying the overcoat under his head (most fortunately he had packed a second, country one for use if the weather proved really cold), he turned down the small notched flame with his right ; then lifting the lamp from the table, blew it out. Beyond the waiting-room it was so dark that the edges of the two windows were indistinct. Indeed, the two patches of tenuous foggy greyness seemed to appear and disappear, like the optical illusions found in Christmas crackers. If there was any chance of Pendlebury's eyes "becoming accustomed to the light," it was now dissipated in drowsiness. Truly Pendlebury was very tired indeed.

Not, of course, that he was able to sleep deeply or unbrokenly. Tired as he was, he slept as all must sleep upon such an unwelcoming couch. Many times he woke, with varying degrees of completeness : sometimes it was a mere half-conscious adjustment of his limbs ; twice or thrice a plunging start into full vitality (he noticed that the wind had begun to purr and creak in the choked-up chimney) ; most often it was an intermediate state, a surprisingly cosy awareness of relaxation and irresponsibility, when he felt an extreme disinclination for the night to end and for the agony of having to arise and walk. Pendlebury began to surmise that discomfort, even absurd discomfort, could recede and be surmounted with no effort at all. Almost he rejoiced in his adaptability. He seemed no longer even to be cold. He had read (in the context of polar exploration) that this could be a condition of peculiar danger, a lethal delusion. If so, it seemed a happy delusion, and Pendlebury was surfeited with reality.

Certainly the wind was rising. Every now and then a large invisible snowflake (the snow seemed no longer to be coming in bullets) slapped against one of the windows like a gobbet of paste ; and secret little draughts were beginning to flit even about the solidly-built waiting-room. At first Pendlebury became aware of them neither by feeling nor by hearing ; but before long they were stroking his face and turning his feet to ice (which inconvenience also he proved able to disregard without effort). In a spell of wakefulness, still surprisingly unattended with discomfort, he began to speculate upon the stormy, wind-swept town which no doubt surrounded the lifeless station ; the yeomanry slumbering in their darkened houses, the freezing streets paved with lumpy granite setts, the occasional lover, the rare law-breaker, both withdrawn into deep doorways. Into such small upland communities until two or three centuries ago wolves had come down at night from the fells when snow was heavy. From these reflections about a place he had never seen, Pendlebury drew a curious contrasting comfort.

SUDDENLY the wind loosened the soot in the chimney ; there was a rustling, rumbling fall, which seemed as if it would never end ; and Pendlebury's nostrils were stuffed with dust. Horribly reluctant, he dragged himself upwards. Immediately his eyes, too, were affected. He could see nothing at all ; the dim windows were completely gone. Straining for his handkerchief, he felt the soot even on his hands. His clothes must be smothered in it. The air seemed opaque and impossible to breathe. Pendlebury began to cough, each contraction penetrating and remobilising his paralysed limbs. As one sinking into an ice-pack, he became conscious of deathly cold.

It was as if he would never breathe again. The thickness of the air seemed even to be increasing. The sooty dust was whirling about like a sandstorm, impelled by the draughts which seemed to penetrate the stone walls on all sides. Soon he would be buried beneath it. As his coughing began to strangle in his throat, Pendlebury plunged towards the door. Immediately he struck the heavy screwed-down table. He stumbled back to his bench. He was sure that within minutes he would be dead.

But gradually he became aware that again there was a light in the waiting-room. Although he could not tell when it had passed from imperception to perception, there was the tiniest, faintest red glow, which was slowly but persistently waxing. It came from near the floor, just at the end of Pendlebury's bench. He had to crick his neck in order to see it at all. Soon he realised that, of course, it was in the fireplace. There was, strangely, a fire. It was just what he wanted, now that he was roused from his happy numbness into the full pain of the cold.

Steadily the fire brightened and sparkled into a genial crepitation of life. Pendlebury watched it grow, and began to feel the new warmth lapping at his fingers and toes. He could see that the air was still thick with black particles, rising and falling between floor and ceiling, and sometimes twisting and darting about as if independently alive. But he had ceased to choke and was able again to sink his head upon the crumpled makeshift pillow. He stretched his legs as life soaked into them. Lethargy came delightfully back.

He could see now that the dust was thinning all the time ; no doubt settling on the floor and hard, resisting furniture. The fire was glowing ever more strongly ; and to Pendlebury it seemed in the end that all the specks of dust had formed themselves into the likeness of living, writhing Byzantine columns, which spiralled their barley-sugar whorls through the very texture of the air. The whorls were rapidly losing density, however, and the rosy air clearing. As the last specks danced and died, Pendlebury realised that the waiting-room was full of people.

There were six people on the side bench which started near his head ; and he believed as many on the corresponding bench at the opposite side of the room. He could not count the number on the other bench, because several more people obscured the view by sitting on the table. Pendlebury could see further shadowy figures on the bench which stood against his own wall the other side of the fireplace. The people were of both sexes and all ages, and garbed in the greatest imaginable variety. They were talking softly, but seriously to one another. Those nearest the fire sometimes stretched a casual hand toward the flames, as people seated near to a fire usually do. Indeed, except perhaps for the costume of some of them (one woman wore a splendid evening dress), there was but one thing unusual about these people . . . Pendlebury could not precisely name it. They looked gentle and charming and in every way sympathetic, those who looked rich and those who looked poor. But Pendlebury felt that there was about them some single uncommon thing which, if he could find it, would unite and clarify their various distinctions. Whatever this thing was, Pendlebury was certain that it was shared by him with the people in the waiting-room, and with few others. He then reflected that naturally he was dreaming.

To realise that one is dreaming is customarily disagreeable, so that one strains to awake. But than this dream Pendlebury wanted nothing better. The unexpected semi-tranquillity he had before at times felt was now made round and complete. He lay back with a sigh to watch and listen.

On the side bench next to him, with her shoulder by his head, was a pretty girl wearing a black shawl. Pendlebury knew that she was pretty although much of her face was turned away from him as she gazed at the young man seated beside her, whose hand she held. He, too, had looks in his own way, Pendlebury thought. About both the clothes and the general aspect of the pair was something which

recalled a 19th-century picture by an Academician. None the less, it was instantly apparent that each lived only for the other. Their love was like a magnifying glass between them.

On the near corner of the bench at the other side of the fire sat an imposing old man. He had a bushel of silky, white hair, a fine brow, a commanding nose and the mien of a philosopher king. He sat in silence, but from time to time smiled upon his own thoughts. He, too, seemed dressed in a past fashion.

Those seated upon the table were unmistakably of to-day. Though mostly young, they appeared to be old friends, habituated to trusting one another with the truth. They were at the centre of the party, and their animation was greatest. It was to them that Pendlebury most wanted to speak. The longing to communicate with these quiet, happy people soon reached a passionate intensity which Pendlebury had never before known in a dream, but only, very occasionally, upon awaking from one. But now, though warm and relaxed, almost, indeed, disembodied, Pendlebury was unable to move; and the people in the waiting-room seemed unaware of his presence. He felt desperately shut out from a party he was compelled to attend. Slowly but unmistakably, the tension of community and sodality waxed among them, as if a loose mesh of threads weaving about between the different individuals was being drawn tighter and closer, further isolating them from the rest of the world, and from Pendlebury: the party was advancing into a communal phantasmagoria, as parties should, but in Pendlebury's experience seldom did; an *ombre chinoise* of affectionate ease and intensified inner life. Pendlebury so plainly belonged with them. His flooding sensation of identity with them was the most authentic and the most momentous he had ever known. But he was wholly cut off from them; there was, he felt, a bridge which they had crossed and he had not. And they were the select best of the world, from different periods and classes and ages and tempers; the nicest people he had ever known—were it only that he could know them.

And now the handsome woman in evening dress (Edwardian evening dress, Pendlebury thought, décolleté but polypetalous) was singing, and the rest were hushed to listen. She was singing a drawing-room ballad, of home and love and paradise; elsewhere doubtless absurd, but here sweet and moving, made so in part by her steady mezzo-soprano voice, and soft, intimate pitch. Pendlebury could see only her pale face and bosom in the firelight, the shadow of her dark hair massed tight on the head above her brow, the glinting and gleaming of the firelight caught within the large jewel at her throat, the upward angle of her chin; but more and more as she sang it was as if a broad knife turned round and round in his heart, scooping it away. And all the time he knew that he had seen her before; and knew also that in dreams there is little hope of capturing such mighty lost memories.

He knew that soon there would be nothing left, and that it was necessary to treasure the moments which remained. The dream was racing away from him like a head of water when the sluice is drawn. He wanted to speak to the people in the waiting-room, even inarticulately to cry out to them for rescue; and could feel that the power hitherto cut off would soon be once more upon him. But all the time the rocks and débris of common life were ranging themselves before him as the ebbing dream uncovered them more and more. When he could speak, he knew that there was no one to speak to.

IN the doorway of the waiting-room stood a man with a lantern.

"All right, sir?"

The courtesy suggested that it was not the porter of the previous night.

Pendlebury nodded. Then he turned his face to the wall, out of the lantern's chilly beam.

"All right, sir?" said the man again. He seemed to be sincerely concerned.

Pendlebury, alive again, began to pick his way from lump to lump across the dry but muddy watercourse.

"Thank you. I'm all right."

He still felt disembodied with stiffness and numbness and cold.

"You know you shouted at me? More like a scream, it was. Not a nice thing to hear in the early morning." The man was quite friendly.

"I'm sorry. What's the time?"

"Just turned the quarter. There's no need to be sorry. So long as you're all right."

"I'm frozen. That's all."

"I've got a cup of tea brewed for you in the office. I found the other porter's note when I opened up this morning. He didn't ought to have put you in here."

Pendlebury had forced both his feet to the floor, and was feebly brushing down his coat with his congealed hands.

"There was no choice. I missed my station. I understand there's nowhere else to go."

"He didn't ought to have put you in here, sir," repeated the porter.

"You mean the regulations? He warned me about them."

The porter looked at Pendlebury's dishevelled mass on the hard, dark bench.

"I'll go and pour out that tea." When he had gone, Pendlebury perceived through the door the first frail foreshadowing of the slow northern dawn.

Soon he was able to follow the porter to the little office. Already the stove was roaring.

"That's better, sir," said the porter, as Pendlebury sipped the immensely strong liquor.

Pendlebury had begun to shiver, but he turned his head towards the porter and tried to smile.

"Reckon anything's better than a night in Casterton Station waiting-room for the matter of that," said the porter. He was leaning against a high desk, with his arms folded and his feet set well apart before the fire. He was a middle-aged man, with grey eyes and the look of one who carried responsibilities.

"I expect I'll survive."

"I expect you will, sir. But there's some who didn't."

Pendlebury lowered his cup to the saucer. He felt that his hand was shaking too much for dignity. "Oh," he said. "How was that?"

"More tea, sir?"

"I've half a cup to go yet."

The porter was regarding him gravely.

"Mind you," said the porter, "I'm not taking any responsibility. If you choose to spend the night, it's entirely your own risk."

"You didn't know that Casterton Station's built on the site of the old gaol?"

Pendlebury tried to shake his head.

"The waiting-room's on top of the burial-ground."

"The burial-ground?"

"That's right, sir. One of the people buried there is Lily Torelli, the Beautiful Nightingale. Reckon they hadn't much heart in those times, sir. Not when it came to the point."

Pendlebury said nothing for a long minute. Far away he could hear a train. Then he asked: "Did the other porter know this?"

"He did, sir. Didn't you notice?"

"Notice what?"

The porter said nothing, but simply imitated the other porter's painful and uncontrollable twitch.

Pendlebury stared. Terror was waxing with the cold sun.

"The other porter used to be a bit too partial to the bottle. One night he spent the night in that waiting-room himself."

"Why do you tell me this?" Suddenly Pendlebury turned from the porter's grey eyes.

"You might want to mention it. If you decide to see a doctor about the trouble yourself." The porter's voice was full of solicitude but less full of hope. "Nerves, they say it is. Just nerves." ★ ★ ★

HEI YU'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT . . .

1

2

4

6

. . . WINDS UP THE WRONG WAY

3

5

Drawn
by
Geoffrey Salter

7

AN ALPINE

A Poem

by JAMES

Illustrations by

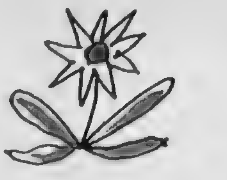
OF all the beautiful things that I have done,
or that have happened to me,
the poetry of motion is the foremost
and possibly the longest lasting.
It is a gift that comes in many forms,
in walking, dancing, running—and in the strange possession
of a wrist that goes with an eye.
This poetry of motion is a passion
that the less fortunate may only witness
passively
But the fortunate produce it for themselves
actively.

To me this has been given in the unlikely form
of two long strips of wood and steel
each one most delicately fashioned
into the precision of a ski.
And these two instruments
have given to my heels—like Mercury—
a pair of wings.

I can remember, vividly,
that moment long ago when first I donned these wings,
(hired quite prosaically from some establishment
that smelt agreeably of melted wax)
and clumsily set forth
thinking I would fly at will . . .
Then I was like the student who,
hearing the echo of a complicated concerto,
seeing the vision of a perfect painting,
living the inner rhythm of a dance—
mentally in tune, but physically untrained—
goes to his room convinced he can produce
these things for himself . . .
and meets with disappointment.
Just so was I with my wings . . .

But always was that disappointment
tempered with the odd knowledge
that the gift was mine, did I
but persevere and learn
For always, even when my clumsiness
resulted in ludicrous contortions,
always was I conscious that the silken beauty
of a ski on snow
was mine.

Even at the beginning
that silken beauty manifests itself
in an initial, sibilant little whisper,
a hiss of smooth wood moving smoothly over snow,
when first a ski is set in motion.
It is a secret whisper—
only for those that have the ears to hear—
which the unfortunate may miss, for it is quickly lost
as acceleration increases
and a rush of wind on the face
drowns out all other sounds
until the inevitable fall.



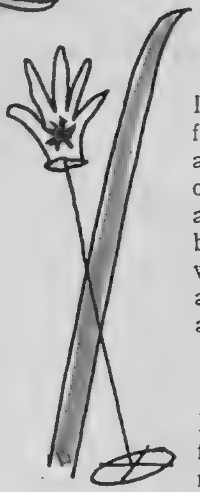
But I heard it.
I heard it then. I hear it still.
This whispered, secret hiss persists
and grows,
(unlike the bloom of youth that gradually fades
from cheek and breast of perishable goods)
more beautiful with time.
It grows more beautiful with time and understanding,
that almost silent hiss
of well-waxed ski on snow,
till it becomes a kiss of passion from the wind,
the sun, the mountains and the snow,
that,
once had, one cannot do without,
and so,
winter after winter without cease,
when snow falls on the Alps,
one travels out to rediscover passion
and to return
that kiss.

Even at the beginning
I knew these things.
Later I knew would come
that swinging ease of motion
that balanced state of bliss
that tracery of curves left in the snow to show
where one has danced on air . . .

But in the beginning I
could only observe this in others.
If they could learn
then so could I.

And so I did.

It took a longish time—
involved a deal of fun.
It took a lot of fear
and it took a bit of pain
But, had I the choice,
I 'd do it
all again.



RHAPSODY

in Prose

RIDDELL

Geoffrey Salter

No one must think I think
I know it all.
For that would not be so.
Never can anyone ever know all about ski-ing
Never can anyone ever know all about snow
Never can anyone ever know all the answers
about anything . . .
That I do know.

But, every now and again,
if one is sensitive to life,
one can come perilously close to reality,
dangerously near to truth.
And one can sometimes catch a glimpse of that full circle
called Perfection . . .
And this can be
either most sobering
or so terribly intoxicating
that one is permanently drunk with the sheer joy of living.

This, I feel,
is why the addict goes
winter after winter to the snows.

I know I go—
not so much now for the heady worship
of the Poetry of Motion—
offered in terms of speed and balance,
and the desire to live dangerously—
Not so much to go pounding ever faster
down the prepared paths they call the Piste—
This I have done at least,
and do it still . . .
But I go now
more for the unprepared ;
the unpredictable ;
for the places where the problems of technique,
which are the finesses of a complicated art,
grow harder . . .
much like the problems of ordinary living
grow harder
as one grows older
and as one becomes more weary of the worldly Piste.

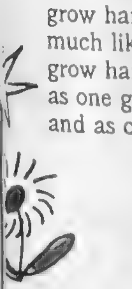
I go
for the inquisitive snaking motion of each ski
as it cautiously explores the inequalities
of drift and windridge . . .
as it goes probing into the strange and beautiful formations
brought to the snow by wind and sun,
when eye and brain and tendon
are busily engaged in snowcraft
and speed would be a folly.

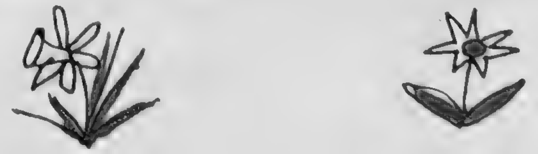
I go
for the places where
no others go
where a way must be found
through rocks that often stand so close
that sometimes there is no way . . .
and one must think again . . .
just as one has to think again so often
in ordinary living.

I go
for the crackle of a ski tip as it breaks a brittle crust . . .
for the rattle of flexing wood as it rides uneven surfaces . . .
for the steel cold feel of a cold steel edge
biting into unrelenting ice
leaving a feather-thin trail on slopes which otherwise
would tolerate no passage . . .
For the rasp of that same steel edge
that causes the wind to drop
and the skis to stop motionless
before some blind horizon.
Treating each problem
much in the way that a man learns to walk warily
and yet is often halted, dead in his tracks,
before some complication
in ordinary life.

I go
for the untracked virgin powder where,
moving in cushioned ease,
that infinitesimal heat of friction
which permits a treated wood to slide on snow,
produces a velvet smoothness to the senses—
more heady than champagne—
where a man with wings on his heels
and delight in his heart
may leave his appreciation upon a hillside
in the form of a mark
of perfect symmetry.

I cannot do the same in ordinary living.
Therefore I go, winter after winter,
to the snow.





WHAT IS BEAUTY?

"'Tis not a lip or eye we beauty call
But the joint force and full result of all."

—Alexander Pope

by MARY VANN

IT is as difficult to define beauty as it is to describe love. There are so many aspects of both; yet each has certain basic qualities that remain constant despite all changes which are brought by time, by fashion and by circumstance. . . .

There is very little difference between the Greek or early Italian concepts of feminine beauty and our modern notion of it. Wander through any great art collection and you will see, in statuary and paintings that date back many centuries, the same exquisite balance of physical proportions—an identical fine modelling and regularity of features—that are acclaimed, in the western civilisation of today, as pure beauty.

Fashions are Distracting

It is mainly the fashion aspects of feminine appeal that change. Indeed, these sometimes actually destroy the beauty of a portrait for those looking at it through the eyes of another era. Today we can see nothing lovely in the ultra-high forehead that was so fashionable in the sixteenth century—so much so that women used to shave their hair back to achieve the "high brow" effect: one has to visualise such paintings with the face set in its natural frame of hair to perceive beauty in it from the modern viewpoint. No doubt the same thing will repeat itself a hundred years or so ahead when generations yet to come stand gazing with bewilderment at our twentieth-century portraits of urchin-cut young women!

Most of us are apt to think of beauty in terms of perfection—a face and form that match each other's loveliness. Yet out of every thousand women born, there is probably only one who is completely physically perfect . . . and even she may lack that subtle something called "appeal." Beauty unlit by vitality and warmth of personality may still be beauty, but it is too statuesque—lovelier, perhaps, to look at than to live with! There are even advantages in a few imperfections. They have a certain warming humanity—and they are of real help to the character in that they curb conceit and put some brake on narcissism.

Almost as rare as perfect beauty is real ugliness. Today, when every form of feminine appeal from the "cute" to the "unusual" is recognised and exploited, ugliness scarcely exists. Even the "plain" woman can throw off that obliterating label—if she really wants to do so. A very little beauty goes a long way in turning plainness to appeal. There is scarcely a woman alive who has not got some possibilities that can develop into real attractiveness with a little effort and imagination. Not for nothing have chemists and cosmeticians worked like beavers for the past thirty years!

It is as natural for women to cultivate attraction as it is for birds to fly. They have done it—crudely, of course, to begin with—from the earliest human history known to man. As civilisations develop, so does the knowledge of beauty culture—and with it the refinements of feminine beauty care. Down among the foundations of a church in the City of London, there are the ruins of what must once have been a cosmetic shop. In it are small, saucer-like receptacles that still show traces of red pigment. Fascinating to think that Roman ladies bought their rouge there, many centuries ago . . . and bleached their hair by spreading it over the wide brims of crownless hats under our English sunshine. . . .

What Vanished Secrets?

We like to think, today, that our own civilisation has evolved the art of beauty culture to a point never before reached. But it 's an intriguing thought to wonder whether, perhaps, the world has known it all before . . . and maybe even more than we know now. So much must have been found by earlier civilisations—and then lost with their decline and fall. What happened in Atlantis, for example? What beauty secrets vanished with that legendary continent? Some say the Atlanteans knew the secret of perpetual youth: perhaps we, too, shall find the same secret in the years to come.

There is a paradox in beauty. To those who perceive it, there is no greater reality; yet to others the same beauty may be unperceived and therefore non-existent. Beauty does, in fact, lie in the eye of the beholder: it depends for its reality upon the individual mental viewpoint. To our western eyes, the duck-billed women of Equatorial Africa seem repulsive—yet to the males of their own race they appear raving beauties. Approval and admiration are so closely linked with custom—and with association of ideas. Many a man sees beauty in a homely face—because it bears some likeness to a beloved mother. Other men may be bewitched by delicate features and fragile colouring—because it is evocative of the imagined faery figures of their childhood. From the practical viewpoint, it is fortunate that tastes do in fact differ, or there would be even more unmarried women seeking hopelessly for husbands!

Words are Misleading

Even the words we use to describe beauty as we see it differ widely. "Pretty," to one person, may mean "chocolate-boxy"; faintly inferior to another; yet to a third it may personify perfection. The whole interpretation hinges, of necessity, upon a purely personal conception, for we are all (let us admit it) privately convinced that we ourselves possess an absolute standard of judgment, regardless of how much our opinions agree or disagree with other people's. There are those who cannot enjoy beauty that is in any way "obvious" —and who abhor the merely pretty as the plague: those, too, who (just to be different in another way) extol the primitive and the crude, and jeer at anything which bears the stamp of intellect or discrimination. There are others who reject all beauty as the human eye sees it, and seek only for the abstract or the apparently distorted.

Yet the unusual and the unobvious have no merit of themselves alone, any more than the obvious lacks merit just because it happens to be commonplace.

Be preference what it may, it is impossible—inhuman—to find perfection in any one woman. If it were, and the "impossible she" became reality, the world would lose rather than gain; for where then would be Corinna, Chloe, Dianeme and the rest who through the centuries have stooped from the heights of poetry to show us. . . . Beauty? ★ ★ ★

THE VISCOUNTESS HAMBLEDEN

The daughter of the late Count Bernardo Attolico and of Contessa Eleanora Attolico di Adelfia, the Viscountess Hambleden was married last year in Rome. This year her portrait by Anthony Devas, A.R.A., was shown in the Summer Exhibition of the Royal Academy, and is reproduced here by the courtesy of Lady Hambleden.

FAITES VOS JEUX !

Playing-cards, the "Devil's Picture Books," have a long history and many uses, not all diabolic.

Christmas to hungry stomachs gives relief,
With mutton, pork, pies, pasties and roast-beef ;
And men, at cards, spend many idle hours
At loadum, whisk, cross-ruff, put and all-fours.

Illustrations
by
David Knight

THE origin of playing-cards seems to be oddly obscure. One tradition has it that they were invented in India, another in Egypt ; in 1423, Saint Bernard of Siena ascribed their invention to the devil. f so, the devil showed a pretty sense f irony in the way he extended their se to Europe, for it is probable that ey were brought back from Arabia y the Crusaders.

In any case, they were known in rope by the middle of the fourenth century, and, by 1399, they ere at least common enough for risian working people to be for-dden to play cards on working days. England, there is a statute of enry VII that forbids card-playing cept during the Christmas holidays, l Henry's daughter, Princess Marret, played cards with her suitor, nes IV of Scotland. Henry VIII ambled with gusto, and it is said that we owe the comparative simplicity of the modern pack to the fact that the original tarot pack had to be simplified for the benefit of the mad King Charles VI of France. Cards have been taxed in England steadily since the reign of James the First.

Some of the earliest playing-cards were round, and Indian cards of this shape may still be seen in museums, but they were soon displaced by rectangular or square shapes. Even to-day, however, there is no uniformity, and Asiatic cards are usually narrower than those used in Europe. The early tarot packs had seventy-eight cards—four suits of fourteen cards each and twenty-two emblematic cards ; the cards of the suits consisted of ten numbered cards, plus the king, queen, chevalier and valet. The extra twenty-two cards were used as trumps. Twenty-one were numbered, and one, called the *fou*, seems to have been wild, just as the joker is usually wild to-day. *(Continued on page 55)*

"The escalator's fine, but it's a pity about the advertisements."

"THE BIG MOUTH"

Bringing you the pulsating drama of one man who dared to tell the truth—and of a woman who got left out because she couldn't be fitted into the story.

by MAURICE WILTSHIRE

ONE Christmas Eve, towards the end of December in the year 19—, my Uncle Alec, at whose country place we were staying to elude the festive season, called us children to him and bade us cluster about his knee with rapt expressions as he had something vitally important to tell us.

In those days I was a gifted, sensitive child much given to solitary walks over the countryside which my fanciful imagination invested with all manner of outlandish objects—trees, grass, cows and the like—much to the distress of my parents. Thus, with my heightened perceptivity I was able to sense the atmosphere of grim boreboding that preceded the moment when, his resolution finally screwed to the sticking place, my Uncle Alec spoke the words that fell upon our astonished ears.

The scene to this day is etched on my memory. (Reproductions are obtainable at reasonable prices from all reputable dealers.)

There sat my uncle in his overstuffed chair, pulling contemplatively at his overstuffed pipe; through the mullioned windows snowflakes fell from a rose-tinted sky to caress the white bosom of the earth; a robin sang on a holly branch ablaze with berries; a stagecoach, with muffled passengers, clattered up to the old posting inn; Waits sang in the servants' hall; Measures, the butler, whistled in his still room as he piped off the raw spirit into lead containers; a great fire blazed in the library, and spread quickly to the east wing before the brigade could get it under control.

My uncle cleared his throat and began: "The time has come for you to know certain things and it's better you should hear them from me than pick them up from furtive guttersnipes who think it's a fit subject for smut and sniggering, which it isn't. It may come as a shock, but that's the way life is—one damn shock after another."

He paused and looked at each of us in turn—which took him a full twenty minutes because not only were we a large family, but the neighbours' kids had got to hear something big was afoot and dropped in too.

"Well, I'll stop beating about the bush," said Uncle Alec, laying aside his stick, "and come straight to the point. Children, there isn't any Santa Claus."

The stunned silence that greeted his astounding revelation was broken only by the sharp explosion of Christmas crackers and cries of childish glee as we youngsters threw ourselves uninhibitedly into the wholesale fun of Yuletide.

"Please," cried my uncle in alarm. "Don't take on so. Perhaps it will help if I give you a brief résumé of the events that led up to this extraordinary state of affairs." And so saying, he launched without more ado into his story, which he cleverly narrated in dramatised form, changing the names to protect the innocent. Thus it ran:

SCENE 1.

Feast of Stephen. A window opens and King Wenceslas looks out. Reverse angle shot from Wenceslas' eye-line showing snow—deep, crisp and even.

WENCESLAS (*calling*): Hither page and stand by me!

Enter Claus as a boy. Through window he sees old peasant digging in snow with numbed fingers and uncovering pathetic twig for kindling.

WENCESLAS: That peasant looks about all in. Let's get after him, lad.

SCENE 2.

Castle Kitchen, later. Page boy Claus, with feet in bowl of mustard, is reading a book on economics while the peasant tucks into a haunch of venison and a stoup of sack.

CLAUS (*to peasant*): Don't misunderstand me, friend. No page ever worked for a better king. I am merely challenging the institution of monarchic indulgence. Too much depends on the whim of the individual. The way this book has it is that the distribution of wealth in the form of gifts or whatever should be under the control of a committee responsible directly to the organised mass of the people. That way everybody gets a fair crack of the whip.

PEASANT: Great idea, Jack. Never happen in our lifetime, though.

SCENE 3.

Quick montage of scenes showing death of Wenceslas, coronation of his heir (a bitter hunchback), gladiatorial circuses, orgies, face grinding violence, lust, simony, antimony, venery, turpitude, blinddarmentzündung and general beastliness.

PEASANT (*in snow*): Times have changed, I trow.

SCENE 4.

Even quicker montage scenes showing Claus, grown tall and husky, leading the revolution, deposing the king, forming a committee, writing pamphlets and re-distributing the wealth.

SCENE 5.

Breakneck speed montage scenes showing Claus kissing babies, handing out warm clothing, signing autographs, currying favour, fricassee-ing chicken. Claus eliminating competition, posing for pictures, listening to eulogies, giving orders to secret police, pulling wings off flies.

SCENE 6.

A dingy cellar. Several centuries have passed. Committee men Protz, Blütz and Ergl plot with Frampton, a maladjusted midget in the pay of a foreign power.

BLÜTZ (*bitterly*): Know what he did last night? He turned round to me—*me*—in front of all those people and said "Dance!"

ERGL: So you danced.

BLÜTZ: Too damn right I danced. I'm no schmendrick.

PROTZ: Know his trouble? It's all to do with this noxious cult of the personality that's going about. He by-passes the committee. Every year it's the same. Comes December 24 and he's off in that lousy sledge of his, copping all the credit. Even does his own chimney work. Won't delegate authority, his trouble.

BLÜTZ: Ah, what's the use? *Tell* people, they'll never believe you. Claus, Claus, Claus everywhere you go. Never Blütz, you notice.

ERGL: Or Ergl.

PROTZ: Or Protz.

FRAMPTON: Nothing official, gentlemen—and if anyone asks me outside these four walls I shall deny everything—but my government is prepared to go to a certain figure if you yourselves take the necessary practical steps. News has come to us that he intends this Christmas to stimulate fresh interest in the Davy Crockett apparatus which, some months ago, was found to have quasi lethal features.

BLÜTZ: Didn't I say he was crazy?

FRAMPTON: At the same time I feel it will help you if you know that a certain company in the west is planning this year to introduce on to the market for the first time the Do-It-Yourself Woomera Atomic Rocket Set . . .

PROTZ: You mean . . .

FRAMPTON: It's up to you, gentlemen.

BLÜTZ (*slowly*): Frampton, if you can find a stronger word than genius, you can have it. You've earned it.

(*They slap each other on the back.*)

SCENE 7.

Christmas Eve. Claus, white-bearded with a mad glint in his eyes, careers across the snow in his sledge. There is a terrific explosion. The sledge disintegrates. After an interval bits fall on to the snow—cotton wool beard, fragments of red cloak, a broken knout and a cardboard lid inscribed "Do-It-Yourself Woomera Atomic Rocket Set."

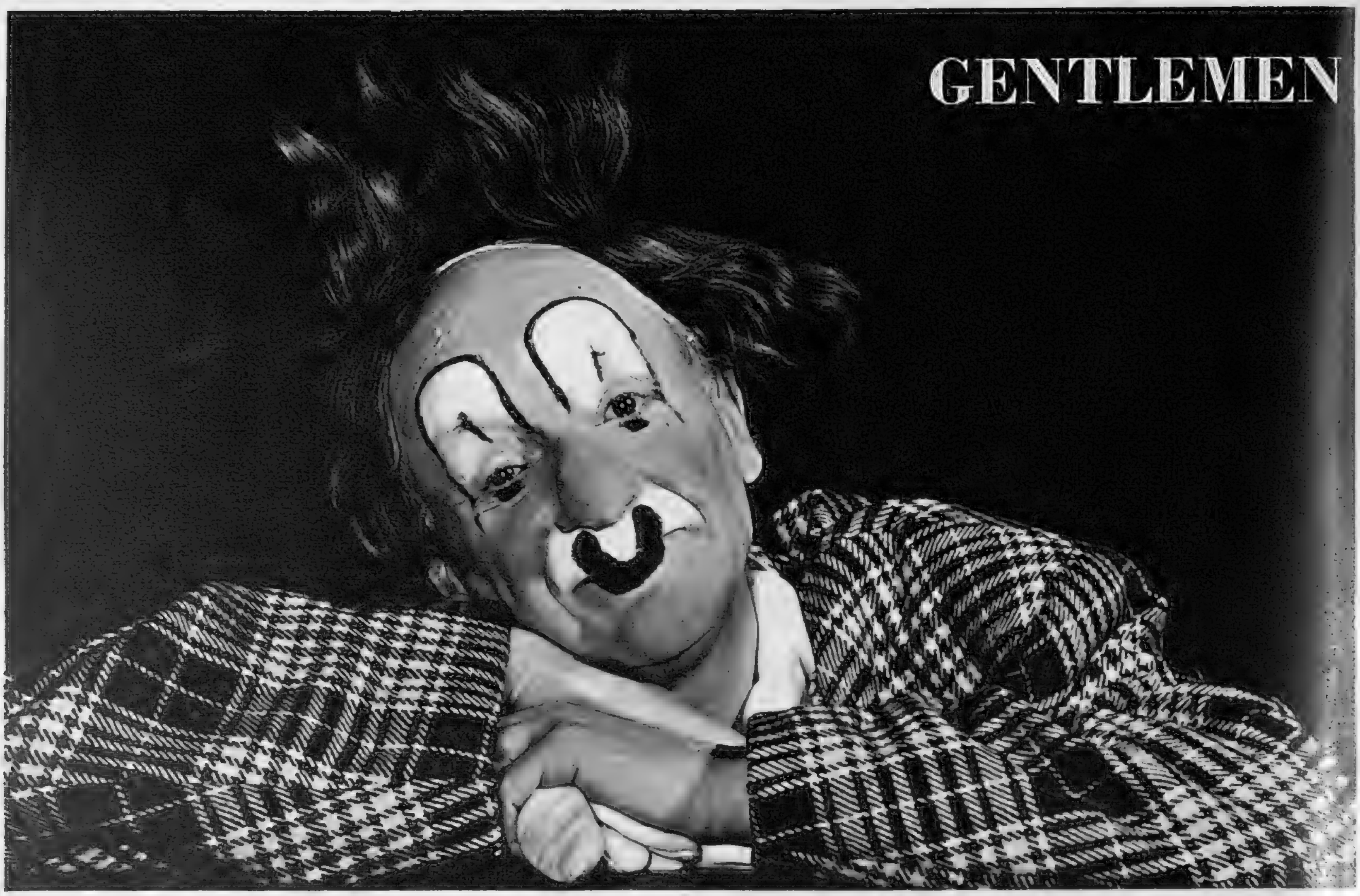
✧ ✧ ✧

"And that," concluded my Uncle Alec, "is how the new look came to the Santa Claus business. The principles of collective leadership which Claus flouted have been re-established. Everything is now run by a syndicate which comprises fathers and uncles operating in the home itself and highly-trained professionals in the grottoes of the main stores."

When we had time to digest the full significance of Uncle Alec's revelation, we all agreed that it had come as a traumatic shock, but not one which well-adjusted personalities would have difficulty in withstanding.

In fact, the only marked effect of this disillusionment upon us children was to cause us to take up pilfering in department stores in preparation for the successful lives of crime we are now living. ★ ★ ★

GENTLEMEN



Coco—the well-beloved Auguste whose painted mouth smiles away the sadness in his eyes.

The great Grimaldi, who gave his name, Joey, to future generations of clowns.

Pictures of Grimaldi, Grock and Coiroll from "Picture Post" Library.

"Here we are again!" they cry, and each Christmas brings the entrance of the circus' best-loved performers—the clowns.

by DICK RICHARDS

SOMEWHERE, at all times throughout the year, the Good Companions of "The Big Top" are at work. The Circus, the most international form of entertainment, never rests from its travels or its labours. But it is fair, I think, to say that it has its most seasonable and irresistible appeal at Christmas.

Perhaps it is all imagination?

Perhaps there is no extra tang to the smell of the sawdust? Perhaps there is not an added glitter to the spangles of those daring, darling amazons who ride bareback or swing with almost *too* nonchalant an ease from the highest trapeze? Is it simply imagination that makes even the ringmaster's top-hat glow with a super-lustre, and the lion-tamer swagger with an extra bravura?

Christmas in the Air

But, surely, even if the rest is imagination, the presence of excited, saucer-eyed kiddies, many experiencing the thrill of their first circus, must make those lovable circus clowns tumble with just that extra abandon and good humour? Don't their trousers descend, their grotesque faces become targets for soot, whitewash and water with just a shade more delight when the smell of Christmas is in the air?

Perhaps not. But do not, please, rob me of my belief.

I have seen circuses without animal acts, without tightrope walkers, without trapeze artistes. I have seen one without the traditional sawdust . . . the excellent Moscow State Circus which visited Harringay and Manchester in June. Instead of sawdust the ring was bedecked with what seemed like red velvet.

Quite Unthinkable

But I have never seen a circus, in any country, without clowns, and the whole idea seems unthinkable and faintly improper, like a Crazy Gang show without Charlie Naughton or an Esther Williams movie without water. To me they are the heart from which stems circus life.

Not that the clown was the creation of the circus. Originally he came from the theatre proper. It has been said that the first clown in the professional theatre was a man named Richard Tarleton, who kept the Tabard Inn in Southwark. A frequent visitor and one who, to bring allusion up to date, could be called a No. 1 Fan of Tarleton was the young Shakespeare who, subsequently, introduced many forms of clown into some of his plays.

Originally the clown was merely the butt of all attendant knavery. On him descended the misfortunes of the world. He was, in modern show-business parlance, the "stooge" or comedian's labourer.

OF THE SAWDUST RING

M. Willson Disher, who is probably the greatest living British authority on circus life, suggests that Joseph Grimaldi was the first to bring overwhelming distinction to the clown. In fact, it is from this Italian that there sprang the universal circus nickname, "Joey the Clown."

It was Grimaldi who developed the leisurely sort of gag which is still part and parcel of the circus: the absurd building sequences which collapse, inevitably, to the delight of children of all ages; the inverted nonsenses such as when Grock laboriously pushed his piano towards his stool instead of, logically, the reverse. Everybody laughed because everybody felt so much more superior.

But Joseph Grimaldi was nobody's fool and he raised the level of clowning to an art, knockabout though it may seem. When he retired in 1823, worn out by his efforts, his son took over in pantomime but he never attained the heights of his father.

Change to Elegance

The success of Joey the Clown, thanks to the Grimaldis, caused a distinct change. Gradually, the clown dropped his unwieldy costumes and weird make-up and became elegant in silks and satins. So someone else had to be found to suffer the dire physical humiliations of ordeal by water, flour, tripping-up, whacking over the head with a bladder, and similar tribulation.

Most successful of the new "stooges" was a man named Auguste, and he gave his name to this unfortunate victim of fate in the circus ring and on the music halls and pantomime stages.

The essential difference between the "Clown" and the "Auguste" is not always understood. Why, in discussing this very article with the Editor I found myself loosely talking about clowns when I knew that I would be referring quite often to Augustes.

Perhaps Coco the Clown, so well-loved in the Mills' Circuses, can be persuaded to take over and explain the difference? In his book, "Behind My Greasepaint," Coco writes: "I think I should make a confession to you. Actually, I am not what you would call a clown, but an 'Auguste.' A clown has a white-faced make-up and wears beautiful costumes with spangles on it. He must not be funny; on the contrary, he must be clever. He should never do anything wrong; but the Auguste is just the reverse; he must be the guilty party who never does right, and that is the part I have to play. Even sometimes when I want to play right I must still do wrong. If somebody has to get the water, I am always the one who gets wet. If the clown wants to break plates he always breaks them over *my* head."

His appearance must be funny—not elegant, like that of the real clown. What does Nicolai Polakovs wear to become Coco? A big red nose—and he has a different one for every show—red hair which he can make to stand up or subside at will. Baggy suits, baggy trousers and tremendously long boots. I don't know the length of Little Tich's famous footwear. "Coco the Clown-Auguste" claims that *his* measure 25 ins.

Coco also explodes a theory that a clown's make-up is copyright. "It 's not possible," he says. Also, it is obvious that it is not necessary. The mere putting on of greasepaint is not enough. It is the way that a man's face responds to his own grimaces that settles the make-up that the public sees. *Your* lines (pardon me, sir) and *my* lines are different. White circles round *your* eyes could make you look cherubic. *Me,* I could look Satanic. Not, of course, that I would necessarily need make-up.

Grock, Whimsical Walker, the Cairoli Brothers, the Fratellini Brothers . . . these are other names that ring stirringly in the ears as great exponents of the droll art of clownery.

Grock took the art of the Auguste to the music-hall and revue rather than into the circus ring. That astute man of the music-hall, Georgie Wood, insists that Grock was a "one-act" man—and Georgie appeared with him on many bills—but Georgie must agree that it was a superlatively funny act. With ludicrously small dress clothes under a huge overcoat, a tiny fringe to his naked head, a petite violin in a huge 'cello-case, Grock conquered. These were his "props." His speech consisted of incomprehensible grunts.

And he became the world's highest-paid clown.

Grock started as junior partner to Antonet, in the famous Circo Parrish, Madrid, the circus showplace of Spain, which has shared with Italy the credit for being the spiritual home of circus clowning. Eventually, the success of Grock became so formidable that the act was dissolved and Grock started again as "Grock and Partner." Then it became "Grock"—and few people need to ask what the word "Grock" stood for.

Delightful Memories

The Cairolis, *père et fils*, have offered London and the provinces delightful memories. Father Cairoli is the clown, his son, the Auguste, in a Charlie Chaplin make-up. Georgie Wood regards him as Britain's greatest . . . but makes the proviso that one feels that Charlie Cairoli can always look after himself. As, shrewdly, Georgie Wood remarks, the perfect clown is someone for whom one must have deep affection *and* pity.

France's greatest clowning family has been the Fratellini Brothers. The great, late Cochran regarded their version of "The Haunted Room" nonsense as the greatest he had ever seen, and I am content to abide by his judgment. For years they were the undisputed comic stars of the Cirque d'Hiver in Paris and, though they never appeared here in circus, they were stars of revue.

As if to prove that there is no rule by which to measure the superb standard of clownishness, we have recently met Russia's Popov in Harringay's Moscow State Circus. Young—only twenty-five—he eschews the traditional crazy clothing of the circus clown. He has lank, fair hair, a cap, a flowing tie and, augmented by his brilliant flair for mime, he well justifies the degree which he won at Russia's University for Clowns. Most famous clowns have learned their art the harder way . . . with nose and feet well down to sawdust.

The never-to-be-forgotten Grock, who was the world's highest-paid clown.

Jimmy Scott, who will partner Coco this Christmas at Olympia, London.

From the U.S.S.R. comes Oleg Popov, a brilliant exponent of mime.

One of Britain's finest Augustes, Charlie Cairoli from the Blackpool Circus.

At Christmas, at Olympia, Coco and a newer clown named Jimmy Scott, who has been with the Mills Brothers for a very few years, will be on parade. They will be but two of many clowns who will be keeping up the Yuletide tradition the world over.

Call them Clowns, call them Augustes, call them merely midget acrobats: it all comes to the same thing. Whatever degree of red in their nasal make-up . . . however fantastic their garb . . . however crazy their wigs . . . however outlandish their antics . . . to the kids they are Circus Clowns.

To the kids they are "Joey the Clown." All of them.

And to all of us who are too young to remember that the first popular nickname for a clown was "Merry Andrew." Why? Well, there was a monk living in the sixteenth century who wrote a funny book. His name was Andrew Borde . . . but that 's a different story.

So a toast to Merry Andrew and to Joey the Clown and all their latter-day descendants whose antics are as much a part of Christmas as mince-pies, mistletoe and the what-the-hell-attitude that precedes the January 1 bills. ★★★

FUN AND GAMES AND ALL THAT

Stay away from parties, and take to your bed with a bottle if you want to enjoy the peace of the festive Christmas Season.

by ALEX ATKINSON

IF you find yourself trapped in a cupboard on Boxing Night with a bony widow in a puce frock, the chances are, gentlemen, that you have become embroiled in one of the most bizarre hazards the Christmas season has to offer: I refer to the get-together at which the entertainment is entirely devoted to Games.

Searching for a Clue

You only met this widow some three-quarters of an hour ago, and even then you didn't quite catch her name. You are both searching for a clue in what has been laughably described as a Treasure Hunt. In the cupboard there are bicycle parts, and a distinct smell of very old bread and butter. The catch of the door has jammed. When you raise your hands to beat on the door you will dislodge things on a shelf where spiders are waiting. The things will fall down, some on you and some on the widow, and they will include grimy candles and a lot of frayed flex with a Chianti bottle on the end of it. You have no way of finding out whether the widow thinks you have cunningly engineered the whole situation and are now planning to force her into a corner and bite her neck. Neither can you be sure whether she is giggling from pure terror or because she fell madly in love with you when you accidentally stroked her bare elbow in Game Number One. Whatever happens, you 're going to look pretty sheepish when they finally let you both out and have to dust you down.

You will find that many people enjoy this Game. They rush about efficiently, whispering vital hints in your ear as they scramble past you on the attic stairs. You will find them all over the place: grubbing about under beds, ransacking the bathroom cabinet, taking up carpets, climbing over wardrobes, swarming into spare rooms, turning the study upside-down, and generally behaving like a battalion of marauding Goths on a refresher course. Most of the time they also laugh like hell, and the Game isn't really complete unless Auntie gets a ladder in her stocking. The prize is a dear little rat made of ultramarine soap, and the applause is deafening. After a two-minute break for stuffed dates or a glass of Mrs. Aldeborough's home-made prune cordial, off you go again on another merry romp. It 's no good looking at the clock: you 're stuck here until the hot sausages and cold mince-pies at twenty to three, and there 's a heavy programme ahead of you, timed to the split second.

I don't know what kind of affair you were expecting. A cosy little session of Solo, perhaps, with bottled beer and turkey sandwiches. Or a leisurely chat about the influence of Dickens on Tennessee Williams, in front of a log fire with a few bottles of Madeira. Whatever it was, you' re out of luck. At any moment now you 're going to be picking up a sixpence with your teeth, blindfolded, from a mound of self-raising flour on a tray in the middle of the carpet, while somebody belts you over the backside with six Sunday newspapers rolled into a club. This is the season of jollity, my friend, and you 're not going to be allowed to forget it.

Handed Down

These Games are handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation, and each year some fresh refinement is added: you never know from one Christmas to the next, for example, whether the stuff they daub on your face in Game Number Four is going to be soot, lipstick, or poster paint: originally, I suppose, it was blood from a freshly-slaughtered mastodon. They must have had a high old

time in those days, what with Hunt the Fig Leaf, Find the Flint, Postman's Rock, and so on, and the tradition is as lively as ever it was.

Asking Foolish Questions

Almost before you 've unwound your scarf, a label will be pinned to your back and you 'll be thrust into a room full of bright-eyed merry-makers all trying to find out who or what they are supposed to be by asking everybody else foolish questions. You won't quite catch the rules of this one because of the hubbub, but that won't make the slightest difference. It is calculated to get everyone on Christian-name terms by making them mingle willy-nilly. Nothing ever comes of it but gibbering chaos: and since it is further complicated by the handing-round of welcoming drinks, you are more than likely to get three fluid ounces of lukewarm fruit cup down your fancy waistcoat before you find that you are Sir Francis Drake and must now blow up a balloon in readiness for Game Number Two.

Balloons occur a lot at these functions. If you 're not trying to inflate one with your mouth full of cream-cracker, you 're fanning it across the floor with a table-tennis bat. Apart from balloons, you will encounter other paraphernalia. This will include sheets of paper numbered down one side from 1 to 10; strips of paper not numbered at all; drinking-straws, for the transport by suction of dried peas, one at a time, from one end of the room to the other; and assorted women's hats. You will be called upon to employ any or all of these at a moment's notice, in a variety of ingenious tests of skill. You may also find it necessary to impersonate Charlie Chaplin, be a statue, find what " suirbhb " is an anagram of, try not to be holding a tangerine when the music stops, make out a neat list of authors beginning with the letter T, creep about the house with the lights out waiting for someone to pretend to stab you through the heart with an Oriental dagger, spell " fuchsia," or take part in a three-legged race.

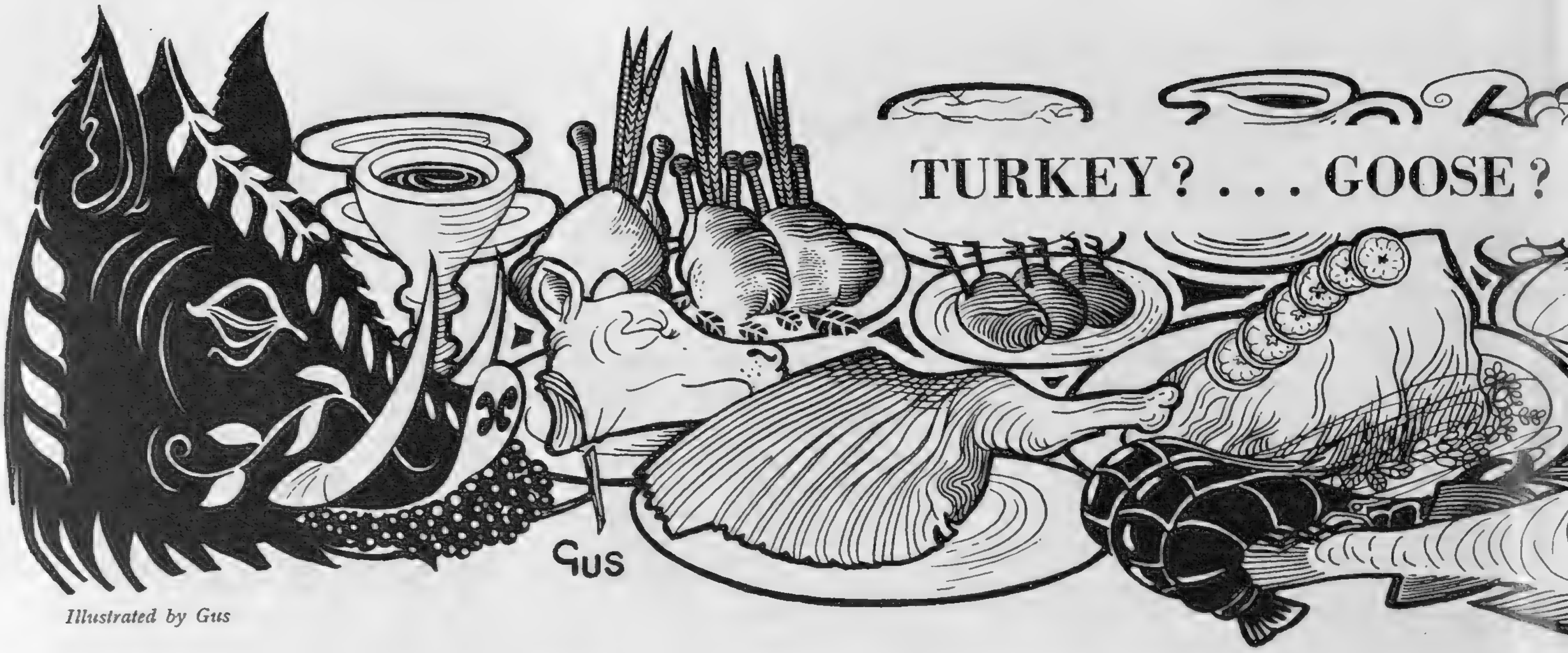
Now and then things will tend to get rather intellectual, and if you don't want to reveal yourself as the backward duffer you are, it 's advisable to stock yourself up beforehand with the answers to such questions as How many legs has a newt? or Who is the President of the Board of Trade? Such Games are designed to let you get your breath back. Take as long over them as you possibly can, and eat a few nuts while the going 's good. One good way to stall is to lose your pencil. I myself once gained a good five minutes' respite by setting fire to the decorations, but that was an extreme case: I had seen the Organiser, in preparation for the next Game, quietly filling an old sock with sand, and chuckling crazily.

Downright Sinister

One final warning. Be particularly careful about the type of Game which is signalled by the Organiser shouting "All the men go out!" These extravaganzas range from the merely embarrassing to the downright sinister. The men are brought in again one by one, and there is no way of telling, as you step into the darkened room, whether you are going to be blindfolded and made to stumble about among lethal obstacles which turn out in the end not to have been there at all, divested of half your clothing, forced by a trick to embrace some blue-jowled Uncle instead of that nice little blonde with the ballet shoes, or sewn up in a blanket and left to die. Your best plan here, as soon as you are ordered out of the room, is to make straight for your hat, nip out through the back door, get into your car, and go home to bed with that bottle of Napoleon brandy you were saving up for New Year's Eve.

You won't, though, if I know you. You strike me as being the sort of chap who is never happier than when he 's being made to drink a tablespoonful of Worcester sauce under the impression that it 's sherry. In fact, the more I think of it the more I get the impression that you 're a born Organiser yourself, only waiting for the day when you can transform a house-full of normal fellow-creatures into a bunch of helpless, perspiring puppets and persuading them they 're having a wonderful time.

Off you go, then, and good luck to you. Bear in mind that Paris is the capital of France, don't forget to wear your shinguards, and eat a good square meal before you start. You 'll have the time of your life. If you notice a sour-looking customer glowering at your revels from a comfortable corner near the drinks table now and then, pay no attention to him. I 'll understand. ★ ★ ★



TURKEY? . . . GOOSE?

Illustrated by Gus

Henry VIII, we gather, was content with roast swan for Christmas. Our correspondent is not, and he gives us three delicious Christmas dinners, the wines to go with them, and the coffee and liqueurs to follow.

THE spectacle of Henry the Eighth with a smoking hot leg of chicken clutched between his pudgy fingers may not have been particularly elegant or stimulating; but neither he nor his merry men (his ladies usually found life too uncertain of duration for merriment) had the slightest need of stimulation any more than of elegance when it came to the pleasures of the table. However jaded their appetites from immediate gastronomic achievements, the faintly acrid aroma of meats slightly singed through the restrictive practices of Tudor kitchen boys labouring (!) at the giant spits was usually enough to drive those gallant trenchermen to further feats of unrestrained and frenzied feasting.

Rivers of Burgundy

The brother of an earlier king may have been drowned in a butt of malmsey by foul design; but the wonder is that Tudor Hal and his hearty henchmen did not meet a similar fate, though accidentally, in the great rivers of burgundy that flowed at their gargantuan feasts. Yet one cannot but restrain a spark of sympathy for a monarch who, so loving food and wine, had the misfortune to have lived in a day before the *art culinaire* reached standards it was later to achieve, or wine attain to such maturity and perfection as was made possible by invention of the new-fangled bottles of glass. If his ample shadow could observe some of the preparations for the Feast of Christmas, This Year of Grace 1956, he would, I am sure, at once eschew mere gourmandising for delights new and undreamed in the subtle, restrained and cultivated pleasures of the gourmet.

All of which strikes in my mind a strange and sudden thought; suppose, even as I write, the shadow of Henry, glancing over my shoulder, and his curiosity aroused, took it into his head to materialise before my four-poster this very night for a royal chat on gastronomic topics of the season? How would the conversation go, one wonders; something like this, perhaps. . . .

HENRY VIII: In my day we plumped heavily for guinea-fowl and peacock, and no Yuletide feast was considered worthy of the name unless it included roast swan. Now there 's a bird for you! Down at my place at Hampton (the one Wolsey ran up for me, you know), we would have as many as half a score of them all roasting at the same time; but nowadays I don't seem to see any at all. How do you account for that, pray?

ROSSITER-SHEPHERD: As a matter of fact, roast swan for Christmas dinner went out of fashion a century or more ago, and even goose has lost some of its old popularity; they have been mostly replaced by turkey, a bird new since your time, Sire. . . .

H. VIII: A new kind of bird, you say? By my halidom! But that sounds exciting. How is it cooked, prithee?

R.-S.: If Your Majesty will be seated for a few moments I will jot down a few Christmas recipes you can take back with you. Though turkeys can be very big birds indeed, you should have no difficulty in roasting them where *you* come from; for present purposes, however, I am speaking of the more popular sized birds weighing from 12 to 16 lb. You may come to consider turkey an overrated bird as some gourmets do; but others regard it as the most *delicate* of birds, which one may have roast, braised or steamed; or done in the oven with onions and carrots and garnished with braised heart of celery; though, more generally, it is stuffed with a mixture of veal and pork, decorated with chestnuts, onions and tiny chipolata sausages and served luscious in its own clear gravy.

The Stuffing Does It

It is a really good stuffing, however, that can lift turkey to such heights as it may attain, and here is one that should delight the most discriminating. Boil or roast for fifteen minutes a couple of pounds of good Italian chestnuts, after which they should easily shell; skin and mash them; add a cupful of plump prunes which have been cooked, stoned and shredded. Then cook the turkey's liver in an ounce of butter; pound; place all together in a small saucepan; season well, and cover with a dry white wine. Simmer until tender and the trick is done.

The real aristocrat of presentations, however, is *Dinde Truffe*, the classic version of which calls for slivers of truffle to be inserted at strategic points beneath the skin of the bird. Regretfully disregarding this method because of its high cost and intricacy of preparation, let us emulate the exploits of Froissart and concentrate on the stuffing. One will still need truffles; fresh ones are unobtainable and the preserved kind will certainly not perfume the kitchen as in Perigord, but they will do well enough for what they are; even at 10s. 6d. for a small tin they are cheap at the price when one considers the accolade they bestow on the right kind of dish.

Full Truffle Treatment

Chop them fairly small and poach in a glassful of madeira or sherry; blend with about 2 lb. of the meat of *Saucisson Toulouse*; though this meat is very rich in flavour it is sometimes inclined to be dry; to obviate this, mix with it a little pork or goose liver *pâté*, and breadcrumbs moistened with milk to lighten and loosen the mixture, 4 ozs. chopped krakowska or Italian mortadella and well season. To give the bird the full truffle treatment, stuff it with this mixture at least 24 hours before roasting in the oven, so that the aroma from the truffles can thoroughly permeate it; then, before putting to the heat, well blanket its breast with a thin layer of salt pork. Serve with a *Sauce Périgueux* and Lucullus himself could ask no more.

Prepared in this manner the dish so obviously demands a champagne, preferably one of the more mature and full-bodied vintages that I will countenance nothing else, though one must bear in mind that a bottle bearing the legend "Dry" is, by English standards, often no more than medium. My choice would be a *Ruinart* 1947 *Carte Anglaise*, preferably by the magnum, if one is lucky enough to find that measure outside a private cellar: failing this, though slightly more dry, would be a *Louis Roederer* 1945.

. . . or SUCKING PIG ? . . .

London Film Productions

. . . . . . by S. ROSSITER-SHEPHERD

The best vegetable accompaniment to turkey is the brussels sprout, and here is the best way of preparing it. Boil for not more than seven minutes some nub sprouts; well and quickly drain, and toss in a little hot seasoned pork fat or butter; sprinkle with finely chopped raw celery that has rested for an hour in the frigidaire. Serve, savour, and frustrate the knavish tricks of those Continentals who sneer at our humble (but only because often badly cooked) brussels sprout by quoting them this recipe.

Roast Goose

There may be those who consider roast goose does not compare with some other birds and certainly one does not want to eat it often. But at the right time (which is now) it is difficult to contemplate a greater thrill than the savouring of the first delicious portion of crisp, succulent flesh crunching on the palate with the texture of a meringue—always providing one has chosen the bird wisely and well. With its thick layers of fat, goose leaves little alternative to roasting, traditionally with a stuffing of sage and onions. If, however, enjoyment of fine wines be the prime consideration, goose stuffed with sage and onions is best passed by. Of the few other stuffings, one of the most intriguing is to stone and shred a couple of dozen large french plums; mix them with a quarter of a pound of *prosciutto crudo* or raw Italian ham, some onion par-boiled and chopped, a few Spanish olives, small-diced and bound with egg and breadcrumbs. With this, small ball potatoes are best, lightly boiled to achieve a floury interior, then sharply finished to a thin but crisp brown outer shell in the goose's own piping hot fat.

This offers a fairly wide choice of wines which need be no more than of everyday calibre, a medium claret or burgundy, while an Alsatian or a hock would mark honours even to bird and to bottle; and here, as always, champagne is the safety bet, well in keeping with the festive spirit of the season, though one should go for a blend that is full and round.

THE WINES: Mumm Cordon Rouge N.V.; Riesling d'Alsace Leon Beyer, 1952; Chat. Batailly, 1945 (Pauillac); Clos de Vougeot Grivelet-Cusset, 1949.

But what is there, bird or beast, to compare for sheer succulence with tender sucking pig not more than three or four weeks old, stuffed with onions and seasoning, roasted before a fire of applewood charcoal, lovingly and constantly basted with its own sweet juices? Failing a charcoal fire, the modern gas- or electric-cooker will do well enough, and onion force-meat, the most simple of stuffings to prepare, does not detract from Master Piglet's delicacy of flavour as do some others. But however prepared and stuffed, this dish, being so rich in fat, demands a sweet-sharp sauce and usually gets one based on green apples which again precludes enjoyment of the finer wines.

But different and delightful is the following, which I encountered at her private house in Alsace where it had been evolved by a relative. Collect three or four tablespoonsful of the piglet's juices, be certain they are as free of fat as possible; blend with half a cupful of fresh grapefruit juice, a tablespoonful of lemon juice, one tablespoonful each of finely grated lemon and grapefruit peel from which all the pith has been scrupulously removed, place in a sauce-pan on low heat until reduced by a third; season and serve handed.

The citrus element in this sauce, or the sharpness of the apple sauce, if used, no less than the stuffing, should it contain more than a whisper of sage, would hardly enhance a more delicate wine.

THE WINES: Brane-Cantenac, 1947; Pfersigberg Reserve, 1952; Vouvray Clos le Mont, 1952; Soave Bianco Secco Verona.

A Sauce for Plum Pudding

Of Christmas plum pudding, that rich concoction of fruits distinguished by the fact that it is not even on nodding terms with a plum, the favourite version of my boyhood was that into which newly-minted silver threepenny pieces had (sometimes) been surreptitiously inserted. Brandy, whisky, and even black beer or stout are often mixed in with it, but only a different sauce can really give it a new slant. This, which I have offered before, is not only outstanding because of the simplicity and quickness of its production, but because, served icy cold, it provides a fascinating contrast to the hot pudding. All one does is to whip together a quarter of a pint of cream and a teaspoonful of caster sugar. Add to this half a small wineglassful of brandy and continue to beat until stiff, after which place it in a sauceboat surrounded by crushed ice for half an hour before serving. For those who may dislike brandy, follow exactly the same procedure, substituting a rich old brown sherry.

Black-and-White Coffee !

And now coffee ! Here is a personal recipe which completes the festive touch and carries the charm of black and white, though it differs from both. First, filter a strong, very hot black liquid: pour it into a claret glass, taking care that the heat does not crack the glass. In this, thoroughly dissolve four or five lumps of sugar, then allow a slightly thickened but very cold cream to trickle on to a spoon held flat against the surface of the coffee in order to prevent it mixing. The cream, about half an inch deep, should float on the coffee with a perfectly clear line of demarcation if it has been gently added. Put spoons away out of temptation's reach and drink the hot, sweet coffee through the soft, cold cream.

You can take coffee this way without sugar, of course, but if you have a sweet tooth then you can add a sybaritic touch by holding in the mouth a small piece of Turkish delight and absorbing the coffee slowly through that. But for the more hardy male one may add a Continental touch, with the perfectly valid excuse that it aids the digestion, by adding a generous measure of brandy, *grappa* or *Marie Brizard anisette* to the coffee before pouring on the cream. The fragrance of the liqueur, thus trapped and sealed beneath the cream, is only released when, blended with the hot coffee, it is drawn on to the palate.

Well, there you are, Sire ! Now get cracking with your varlets or whatever you call them—and a Merry Christmas to You All. ★ ★ ★

THE "SKETCH" QUIZ

A memory game to keep you amused without budging from that favourite armchair in front of the fire. No prizes offered. Answers on page 56.

Answers on page 56.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Yes, But Where Is It?

Here is a list of places tourists love to visit. In what county is each?
Stonehenge ; Tintern Abbey ; Windermere ; St. David's Cathedral ; Bredon ; Edgehill ; The Forest of Dean.

Trade Marks

Famous products are associated with their trade marks. Can you tell us what goods the following marks signify?
(*a*) a white spot ; (*b*) a triangle ; (*c*) a cockerel ; (*d*) a sailor and lighthouse ; (*e*) the words "It's a dream . . ." ; (*f*) a fly ; (*g*) a basket of eggs.

And Nicknames

Each of the States of the USA has its nickname. With what States are the following nicknames associated, and what do they mean?
Buckeye ; Tarheel ; Hoosier ; Coyote ; Lone Star ; Gopher.

Kings and Queens

(*a*) Name the nationality at birth of the following Royal notabilities :
Marie Antoinette ; Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles II ; King Haakon of Norway ; King Carol of Rumania.
(*b*) And when *did* Queen Anne die, anyway?

★

MOTORING

Emergencies

(*a*) You are driving in Switzerland, and round a mountain bend you hear the horn of a motor-coach. What must you be prepared to do?
(*b*) While warming-up the engine of your car, you get a pop-back into the carburettor, which sets it on fire. What is your best course of action?
(*c*) Where in London do you turn left to turn right, and then drive under water?

Legal Eagles

(*a*) Can you ever legally drive on against a red light without a green filtration arrow?
(*b*) You are learning to drive a three-wheeled car. In Britain, this is technically a motor-cycle. Do you need to carry a fully-licensed driver as passenger?

History

(*a*) Can you name three makes of car that were produced with steam engines?
(*b*) What was the Crown Ensign?
(*c*) What is or was the country of origin of the following makes? Steyr ; Spyker ; Saab ; Hispano-Suiza ; Volvo ; Stearns ; Lafayette ; Minerva.

Fiction

Some of these names of makes are fictitious. Which? Lowland ; Leyland ; Unic ; Punic ; Piccard-Pictet ; Panther ; Hirondelle.

Geography

(*a*) Name the 1956 Rule of the Road in the following places : Gibraltar ; Sweden ; China ; Japan ; Pakistan ; Vatican City.
(*b*) Of what countries are the following the international plates? P ; IS ; WAG ; TS ; TD ; MC ; RA ; RCH ; CL ; CY.
(*c*) At Oxford Circus, in London, how far are you from the nearest piece of cobbled (stone-sett) roadway?

★

BOOKS

Noms de Plume

What are the real names sheltering behind the following *noms de plume*? Voltaire ; Sapper ; Nicholas Blake ; Currer Bell ; Anthony Armstrong ; Junius ; E. M. Delafield ; Saki ; James Bridie ; Boz ; Dornford Yates.

Next in Line

Each of the following books is the first in a series of at least two. Can you name the title of the book which follows it?
"Du Côté de Chez Swann," by Marcel Proust ; "A Man of Property," by John Galsworthy ; "Phineas Finn," by Anthony Trollope ; "The Pursuit of Love," by Nancy Mitford ; "A Question of Upbringing," by Anthony Powell ; "The Golden Age," by Kenneth Grahame.

Childhood Memories

Who said :
(*a*) "There is *nothing*—absolutely nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats."
(*b*) "Janet ! Donkeys !"
(*c*) "It's not so much the *toes*, as the *ears*."
(*d*) "Off with his head !"
(*e*) "No more twist."
Finally, what was the "It" in "Five Children and It?"

Jobs for the Boys and Girls

What were the jobs of the following people, and in what books do they figure?
Mrs. Gamp ; The Reverend Septimus Harding ; Mr. Polly ; Raskolnikov ; Mr. Wackford Squeers ; Flurry Knox ; Charles Bovary ; Winston Smith ; Mrs. Danvers ; Billy Budd ; Mr. Salteena.

★

FOOD AND WINE

Where?

(*a*) From where in France do the following wines come? Chablis ; Hermitage ; Muscadet ; Pouilly-Fumé.
(*b*) One of these is a Burgundy. Which is it? Château Lafite ; Château Latour ; Clos de Tart ; Château Mouton Rothschild ; Château-neuf du Pape.
(*c*) Where would you expect to eat the following dishes? Bouillabaisse ; Soda bread ; Gulyas ; Svestkove knedliky ; Clam chowder ; Paella.

And What?

(*a*) What distinguishes these different varieties of *pasta* from one another? Gnocchi ; Fettucini ; Tagliatelli ; Pappardelle ; Cannelloni.
(*b*) What are the following? Quetsch ; Suze ; Kümmel ; Cinzano ; Cassis ; Essence of Tokay.

Snips and Snails and Puppy-Dogs' Tails

What are the following dishes made of? Champ ; Weiner Schnitzel ; Soubise Lyonnaise ; Ravioli.

★

THEATRE

Who Wrote Shakespeare?

A number of people have found it difficult to believe that William Shakespeare wrote the plays we associate with his name, but there seems to be no unanimity among the doubters on the question of who *did* write them. To which of the following has the authorship of Shakespeare's plays been ascribed?
The Viscount of St. Albans ; the Earl of Oxford ; the Earl of Derby ; the Earl of Rutland ; Lady Pembroke ; Christopher Marlowe.

Country of Origin

From which countries have the following well-known playwrights hailed? Pirandello ; Pinero ; Lorca ; Ibsen ; Miller ; Camus ; Gogol ; Strindberg.

Christian Names

Popular singers nowadays always seem to be known best by their Christian names, perhaps because names like Johnny and Frankie are easier for the gallery girls to howl. What were the first names of the following actors and actresses?
Macready ; Burbage ; Woffington ; Waller ; "Rachel" ; Kean ; Bernhardt ; Beerbohm Tree ; Granville Barker ; Terry ; Slaughter ; Garrick ; Cibber ; Alexander.

Facts and Figures

(*a*) Which is the oldest English theatre actually in use?
(*b*) Which theatre in the country has the largest stage area?
(*c*) Which had the first revolving stage?
(*d*) What were the names of Shakespeare's theatres?
(*e*) Which are the Royal (or patent) theatres in London?

Long Runs

All the following plays and musicals had runs of more than 1,000 performances. Can you put them in the order of the longest run?
Blithe Spirit ; Me and My Girl ; Our Boys ; Chu Chin Chow ; The Maid of the Mountains ; A Little Bit of Fluff ; Arsenic and Old Lace ; French Without Tears ; Together Again ; Perchance to Dream ; Oklahoma ! ; Quiet Week-End.

★

FASHION

Furs and Fibres

(*a*) From what animals do the following furs come? Nutria ; Musquash ; Caracule ; Kolinsky ; Solongoi.
(*b*) Fibres are not all "natural." Of the following, which are "man-made"? Worsted ; Nylon ; Ardil ; Taiho ; Shantung.

Beautiful Scents

Who manufactures the following scents? L'Heure Bleue ; No. 5 ; Canasta ; Le Dix ; Bond Street ; My Love.

Historically Speaking

At certain times in history, the following garments have been the very height of fashion. What exactly were these garments?
(*a*) a wimple ; (*b*) a farthingale ; (*c*) a pelisse ; (*d*) a bustle.
Finally, what is the origin of "clocks" in stockings?

Of National Importance

What nationality are or were the following couturiers? Worth ; Balenciaga ; Chanel ; Digby Morton ; Irene Gilbert.

Fashionable Colours

What are the following colours? Pervenche ; Taupe ; Coquelicot ; Chartreuse.

★

GARDENING

The Name 's Not the Same

By long usage, certain flowers and shrubs have acquired names not their own. What are the correct names for what most of us would call a (*a*) Geranium ; (*b*) Lilac ; (*c*) Syringa.

A Change of Climate

(*a*) From what countries did these flowers originally come? Tulip ; Freesia ; Winter Jasmine.
(*b*) What is the name of the English pear to which the Americans gave the name "Bartlett"?
(*c*) Which of these plants comes from the Holy Land? Jerusalem Artichoke ; Rose of Sharon ; the Crown of Thorns ; the Calvary Clover.

Scent and Sweetness

(*a*) Which of these flowers is scented? Christmas Rose ; Tuberose ; Guelder Rose.
(*b*) Which of these apples improves with storing? Beauty of Bath ; Worcester Pearmain ; Bramley Seedling ; Early Victorian.

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Christmas dinner in Centennial Park, Sydney, Australia.

In some parts of the world
Christmas brings sunshine instead of snowflakes
electric fans instead of icy breezes
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the first name you think of in biscuits

window of a picture dealer. He gave a gasp of surprise and delight. There was a small oil painting of the mill and pond at Aylsham. He was quite sure of it, yet, wanting his certainty confirmed, he went inside and asked the dealer. "That 's right, sir," the dealer said. "It 's by Samuel Cooper, the miniaturist, and one of the few paintings he 's ever done outside miniatures. Do you wish to buy it? What is the matter, sir? Are you unwell? Would you like to sit down? Some water?"

"I am all right. It is nothing. Where did you get that picture?"

"The young woman, sir?"

"Yes, that one; the young girl; I know her. Where did you get it?"

"Now that is very strange, sir. First you ask me about a picture painted by my friend, Sam Cooper, who mostly paints only miniatures; and now you ask me about this picture of a pretty girl painted by my friend, Jan Fyt, who is an animal painter, and this, I should say, is perhaps the only painting of a young woman he has ever done."

"Do you know when it was painted?"

"It was painted this spring. Jan was over here and when he called he gave it to me as a present. So it is not for sale, sir."

"You don't know where it was painted?"

"Somewhere in Suffolk, but that 's all I know."

"Where is Mr. Jan Fyt now?"

"Back in Antwerp."

"Can you give me his address?"

"Why, yes, sir. It is Wilhelm Street, in the big square opposite the church of St. Mark."

JAN FYT, when Dick called on him ten days later, was eager to help. "I was staying at Framlingham and I was out one day with my easel and I saw this young girl standing in a garden and was so taken with her fresh English beauty that I then and there painted her; just a sketch in oils; but I think I caught the likeness."

"It is her living, breathing image."

"You know her, then?"

"I once knew someone so like her they might be twin sisters. How far from Framlingham were you?"

"About four miles or so. See, I 'll draw a plan for you of the way I went. It is fresh in my memory. And the house and the garden where I painted this lovely young English miss."

Dick hurried back to England. In London, moved unconsciously by a dream not yet born, he shaved his beard and bought new clothes. He went down to Framlingham and quickly traced Jan Fyt's walk and came to the house and the garden. It was in the village of Debenham.

He walked slowly up the long path and to his knock an elderly woman came. He said, "May I speak to you? I have a story to tell you."

They sat in a settle at the wide window looking out on the garden and he told her his story and why he had come to see her.

"What was the name of your betrothed?" she asked.

"Effie Deane."

She nodded. "Yes. But it was Brown, not Deane, she called herself. It was eighteen years ago and my husband had gone into Norwich to the hiring fair. He was a woollen merchant in Stowmarket and has been dead these seven years. There he hired Effie Brown as a maid, not knowing her condition. It was not until she had been with us over a month that I discovered it; but by then she had found a place in our hearts. She was a lovable girl. She died of childbed fever three days after her babe was born and we adopted the child as our own, having no children, and gave her the name Jenny as Effie had wished us before she died. There she is."

The garden wicket gate swung open and a young girl came in and stood looking towards the house. He caught his breath, so like she was to the girl he had loved. And now the dream came to full birth. He would roll back the years. He would find his youth again and happiness at last.

The girl turned as a young man vaulted the gate and, coming to her, twined a red rose in her dark hair.

He heard their laughter; saw them clasp hands and kiss. The woman said, "They are sweethearting. They will be marrying in the Fall."

The young lovers left the garden and as he watched them go the years flowed back upon him and he knew himself an old man. He heard the woman speaking and the words were lost in the anguish of his thoughts. And then he heard her say, "You will stay and meet her?"

He got up from the settle. "No," he said. "I do not want to break in upon her life. I wish her great happiness." He took the thin gold chain and cross from his neck. "Give her this on her wedding day. Say it is from an unknown friend. Good-bye." He held out his hand. "Thank you for telling me. Nothing, thank you. I must catch the coach."

He sailed from Southampton at the end of August in the barque *Griselda*. There were aboard 115 men, women and children going to New England.

Ten days out and 600 miles W.S.W. of Land's End, *Griselda* was hailed by the schooner *Esmeralda*, homeward-bound from Newfoundland, and returned the hail. She was never heard of again. ★ ★ ★

THE FLOWING BOWL

Arnold wrote of "amber grapes and Chian wine"; Keats of that beaker "full of the warm South." We do not presume to poetry—but we do think that if your flowing bowl is filled at Christmas with any one of these there is a fair chance that you will "merry merry be"!

BORDEAUX BOWL

Ingredients: 1 bottle claret, 1 tablespoonful sugar, grated nutmeg, ½ sherry glass orange Curacao, and 1 tablespoonful sugar.

Method: Heat mixture but do not boil. If preferred, you can add 1 sherry glass of port instead of the Curacao.

UNCLE TOM'S TODDY

Ingredients: 1 bottle Burgundy, lemon juice, 1 tablespoonful sugar, ½ measure brandy, cinnamon, Curacao and cloves.

Method: Heat half a bottle of water in a large saucepan, adding sugar, pinch of cinnamon, a few cloves and dash of lemon juice. When water is nearly boiling, add wine. Add brandy and 1 quarter of a sherry glass Curacao. Bottle mixture and keep warm.

DR. JOHNSON'S CHOICE

A very old and popular mull of the eighteenth century.

Ingredients: 1 quart claret, sugar, orange Curacao, cloves, brandy, nutmeg.

Method: Pour claret into saucepan, put with it sliced orange, twelve lumps of sugar and six cloves. Bring these nearly to the boil. Boil 1 pint of water and add to the mixture. Add 1 wineglass of Curacao and—if you want to give your guests something to remember—add 1 wineglass of brandy. Pour into glasses and grate nutmeg on top.

SANTA'S SURPRISE

Ingredients: 1 bottle of Chianti, 2 cups of water, 2 lemons, 4 sticks of cinnamon (or ground cinnamon equivalent), 1 cup granulated sugar, 4 cloves.

Method: Boil water with sugar, cinnamon and cloves for five minutes. Add lemon thinly sliced and allow to stand for 10 minutes. Add wine and heat slowly but do not allow to boil. Put it in a pitcher or jug and serve very hot. A silver spoon in each glass will prevent it from cracking.

ROMAN REVIVER

Ingredients: 1 bottle Rhone Red, ¼ lb. honey, grated nutmeg, sliced lemon.

Method: Heat wine, honey, nutmeg and sliced lemon in a saucepan to boiling point. Add half bottle of hot water and serve piping hot.

CASTENETA

Ingredients: 1 quart Spanish red wine, lemon slices, 1 cup sugar, grated nutmeg.

Method: Heat wine, sugar and nutmeg to boiling point. Remove grated nutmeg. Pour into glasses with slice of lemon in each glass. (Place a silver spoon in glass before pouring in mixture, to prevent glass breaking.)

BISHOP

Ingredients: 1 quart port, 2 lemons, cloves, mixed spices, 2 oz. lump sugar, 1 pint water.

Method: Stick a lemon with cloves and roast it. Put a quart of port into a saucepan and bring to the boil. Boil 1 pint of water, adding a good pinch of spices. Add boiled water and spices and roasted lemon to the hot wine. Then rub the 2 oz. of lump sugar on the rind of another lemon, put it into a bowl, adding half the juice of the lemon, and pour in the wine. Serve as hot as possible.

MADEIRA MIST

Ingredients: 1 bottle Madeira, 2 tablespoonfuls brandy, 1 cup castor sugar, 4 tablespoonfuls apricot brandy, 2 cups grapefruit, 1 cup sliced pineapple.

Method: Heat together the Madeira, brandy, sugar and apricot brandy. Then add the grapefruit and sliced pineapple. Serve hot.

THE CHARM OF GEORGIAN SILVER

(Continued from page 22)

Following the style of Meissen and Chelsea porcelain, which were then fashionable, they had exquisitely modelled pastoral figures, possibly representing the four seasons, the stems and branches being wrought with birds perching on them.

Nearly two centuries later, Pentecost Symonds' teapot and Thomas Powell's candelabra, both of which had been made at an eventful period in this country's history, were bought by Garrards, the present Crown Jewellers, for the recently-restored Governor's Palace at Williamsburg, in Virginia, where the English Governor had reigned in the time of George III.

All the silver that was collected for the Palace had to be of the finest quality and able to stand up to critical inspection by experts from all over the world, so eventually the two pieces of Georgian silver became splendid ambassadors to America. Their beauty and gracious design made even the Americans forget all about the Georgian Kings who had once ruled them so unwisely! Many Americans and Canadians have come to Britain as a result of their admiring the work of Pentecost and Thomas Powell, and Georgian silver has become an extremely valuable dollar-earner.

Fascinating Story

The whole story of the highly-skilled silversmiths who worked during the reign of the four Georges is colourful and fascinating. Their art was as rich as it was varied, for to-day we may see charming sugar castors and bowls, Chippendale tea-caddies with their spoons, cake baskets elaborately pierced and chased, delightful sauce-boats and cream-jugs, with magnificent centrepieces and loving cups, each a masterpiece in its sheer perfection of design and quality. Salts, candlesticks, graceful teapots, richly-decorated soup tureens and coffee-pots—some particularly lovely examples of the last-named were made by Samuel Wasteel, of London, in 1720; in 1773 by Hester Bateman, a woman silversmith whose work is greatly sought-after in the U.S.A.; and by William Tuite, of London, in 1762.

To the collector of Georgian silver, a working knowledge of the silversmith's hall-marks is absolutely essential, but it requires a lifetime of study to gain a full grasp of them, so numerous are they; quite apart from their being extremely complicated and apparently often misleading, since craftsmen were never too anxious that the layman should learn all the secrets of their trade. Nevertheless, silver which bears the hall-marks of ancient and highly honourable guilds of silversmiths, stamped at accredited assay offices, is with very few exceptions what it claims to be. Old masters, engravings and furniture can come upon the market without any fear of the watchful eye of officialdom, but the collector of silver is always protected.

In order to give some idea of the main guilds which were flourishing in the reigns of the four Georges, it may be as well to set these out in some order of importance.

Ashmolean Museum

The grace and ornamental work of this George I cup and cover engraved with the arms of Philip Yorke, Baron Hardwicke, shows the mastery of Paul de Lamerie.

Naturally, London was a leading Guild, dating back to mediæval times, whilst there were others, some of whom had their origins in the sixteenth century in Birmingham, Chester, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Exeter, Lincoln, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Norwich, Sheffield and York. All these Guilds possessed their own distinctive hall-marks, consisting of a fantastic number of symbols and uses of the alphabet in an amazing variety of types.

Useful Reference Book

A most useful little book on these marks of origin, quite invaluable to collectors, is "British and Irish Silver Assay Office Marks," compiled by Frederick Bradbury, F.S.A. It is published by J. W. Northend Ltd., of West Street, Sheffield, and apart from covering all the main guilds, it shows the marks of many of the minor guilds such as King's Lynn, Barnstaple, Bristol, Lincoln and Taunton; all these minor guilds, and certain of the major ones like Exeter, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Norwich and York, have unhappily ceased to exist.

No more enjoyable way of spending a day can be found than wandering slowly through the old streets of York, where good Georgian silver may still be found in the quaint shops in the Shambles and around the Minster.

Chester, with its unique Rows, is another good hunting-ground, as are George Street, The Lawnmarket and Canongate, in Edinburgh, which maintained its own minor guild quite separate from the main Edinburgh guild right up until 1836. Bath, that most enchanting of Georgian cities, has particularly fascinating shops where only the choicest examples of silver are displayed.

How often those graceful sauce-boats, sugar castors and salts must have been admired as they adorned the table at some long-forgotten dinner-party held in the Royal Crescent, or in the golden candlelight of the Pump Rooms, where Beau Nash was a most eminent master of ceremonies.

Strangely enough, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, a city associated with the coal trade and shipbuilding, there are excellent silver shops. Much silver was assayed there in the early eighteenth century; mostly domestic in character, including many coffee-pots and teapots, as well as a large quantity of beautifully-made tankards and two-handled cups.

London, however, has always been, and is now more than ever, the acknowledged world centre for Georgian silver. It is singularly fortunate in possessing many old-established concerns who have built up over the centuries the highest reputation for their integrity and sound judgment. One can deal with all of them with the utmost confidence.

Most of these businesses are in the neighbourhood of St. James's, Jermyn Street, Regent Street and New Bond Street. Harmans, in the last-named street, was a favourite haunt of the late Queen Mary, who often spent a happy hour or so there purchasing some piece that had caught her expert eye. Quite apart from being a noted connoisseur of silver, Queen Mary possessed an uncanny sense of prevailing values.

Distinctive Pieces

Edinburgh is also rightly proud of the fame of Scottish makers. Many distinctive pieces bearing the Edinburgh hall-mark are in the Royal Scottish Museum, in Chambers Street, where an early George III coffee-pot by Patrick Robertson, dated 1769, is one of the most beautiful exhibits. By the same master is a tea urn of the year 1778—an exquisite work in classic style with a fluted oviform body decorated with acanthus ornament.

Despite the fact that prices in general have risen to such an extent, the prospective buyer of Georgian silver does not require quite so well-lined a purse as one would imagine. If, of course, the purchaser wishes to indulge his or her whim in a centrepiece, tea kettle or a sugar basket by Paul Lamerie, then the price that will have to be paid will strain even the most substantial purse.

Exactly the same thing applies to the work of that other equally inspired master, Paul Storr, the last of the great silversmiths. It must be remembered, however—and this is most important—that no silversmith could belong to a guild unless he had proven his worth, so there are many other accomplished craftsmen whose work consistently maintained an extremely high standard. Although these silversmiths may not have had the same almost mystic aura attached to their names as had Paul Lamerie, Paul Storr and Pierre Platel, their pieces are always charming and can still be bought at a remarkably reasonable figure. *(Continued on page 55)*

THE CHARM OF GEORGIAN SILVER *(Continued from page 54)*

Quoting present-day prices is not very satisfactory, as so much depends on condition, weight and other circumstances. But a fair indication of the prices prevailing at the moment for various pieces, all by noteworthy silversmiths, is as follows :

George II Coffee-Pot by Edward Feline of London	£185
George II Coffee-Pot by Henry Herbert of London	£235
George III Coffee-Pot by Benjamin Gignac of London	£115
George III Tea-Caddy by John Tweedie of London	£50
George II Teapot by Thomas Whipham of London	£235
George III Candlesticks by H. Herbert of London, a pair	£90
George III Tankard by Thomas Chawner of London	£67 10s.
George II Sugar Castor by Samuel Wood of London	£47 10s.
Pair of Sauce-Boats, George II, by William Grundy of London	£210

Crowning Achievement

Most of the magnificent creations by Paul Lamerie are now either in America or in the possession of private collectors. Fortunately, his Loving Cup dated 1733 is now in the Birmingham City Museum, whilst the wonderful Newdigate Centrepiece, Lamerie's crowning achievement of the year 1733, can be seen in all its magnificence in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Last summer, the Museum was fortunate enough to acquire Lamerie's renowned Walpole Salver for the sum of £7,800, thanks to a generous grant from the National Art-Collections Fund, the Pilgrim Trust and the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths. When it last changed ownership at the sale of the Strawberry Hill Collection of Horace Walpole on May 6, 1842, it was sold for £101 12s. 6d.

Greatly cherished by the authorities of the Ashmolean Museum, in Oxford, who own the splendid William Francis Farrer Collection and the Mallett Bequest, are the George Treby Newfoundland Fisheries Bowl and Ladle and the Treby Toilet Set. Both are by Paul Lamerie, and in creating them he attained for himself a rare immortality, for we will never see their like again. Enriched by engraving attributed to Hogarth, the Treby Bowl represents the very pinnacle of the silversmith's art. It was a gift from George Treby to Arthur Holdsworth, who was Admiral of St. John's Harbour, in Newfoundland. Both these West Country worthies had gilt-edged investments in the Company of Adventurers in the Newfoundland Fishery Trade. Whether Hogarth or an unknown artist did the engraving remains a matter of conjecture over which expert opinion differs, but it has a wealth of detail executed with a skill that is miraculous. One side shows a procession of the Company of Adventurers walking beside a harbour with ships in the background. The other depicts the Admiral and the Company sitting down to what must truly have been a memorable dinner. The Holdsworth Bowl is seen prominently amongst them, and one amusing tableau shows a dog and cat sparring for a piece of meat that has just fallen from their master's plate. Around the edge of the Bowl is the eloquent inscription, " Prosperity to Hooks and Lines."

Fine examples of Paul Storr's works are also at the Victoria and Albert Museum as well as at Apsley House. What fabulous prices they would obtain to-day can only be surmised, as silver by either Paul Storr or Paul Lamerie ranks comparatively in the same category of value as do the old masters. To the many connoisseurs who wish to see the more precious specimens of eighteenth-century silver, a visit to either the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Mansion House, or certain of the Guild Halls like the Goldsmiths' Hall in the City, will provide ample reward.

Isolated Masterpieces

Both the Victoria and Albert Museum and Apsley House have admirable collections, the former covering every reign of the Georgian Kings.

At the Victoria and Albert, occupying places of honour, are two salts by Paul Storr fashioned in 1815 and two equally delightful soup tureens dated 1819. Near by is Samuel Herbert's lovely George II cake basket, a miracle of craftsmanship with its delicate and airy piercing. Completed in 1757, it was at that time a Master Silversmith's tribute to the grace and charm of the Gainsborough and Reynolds beauties who presided so elegantly over the intimate tea-parties held in their gilded salons.

There are, of course, many other pieces, like S. and J. Crespell's exquisite sugar bowl of 1773, a George I helmet-shaped jug by Pierre Platel, Paul de Lamerie's master, not to forget two outstanding George III cream jugs made in Dublin by William Hughes in 1765. All of them are silent but deeply eloquent witnesses of an unforgettable age of elegance and good taste, where time mattered little to the craftsman, but perfection in design and finish counted above all else. ★ ★ ★

FAITES VOS JEUX !

(Continued from page 41)

The suits on the earliest European cards (which are German) are hearts, bells, leaves and acorns. A little later we find swords, batons, cups and money in Italy. Nowadays we use the suits found in sixteenth-century France—hearts, trefoils (clubs), spades and diamonds. The Court cards have always had a little more variation in them, and have been used to caricature prominent personalities of the time ; of the standard modern pack, the kings are said to resemble Henry VII, the queens his mother, Elizabeth of York.

If cards are " the Devil's picture books," they have often been put to inspirational uses. In 1518, a Franciscan friar published a system of teaching logic by means of playing-cards, and afterwards tried to teach a summary of civil law in the same way. In 1651, a Mr. Pendleton produced a pack designed to teach grammar, and at the close of the seventeenth century there was published the *Genteel House-keeper's Pastime ; or the Mode of Carving at Table represented in a Pack of Playing-Cards, by which any one of Ordinary Capacity may learn how to Carve, in Mode, all the most usual Dishes of Flesh, Fish, Fowl, and Baked Meats, with the several Sauces and Garnishes proper to Every Dish of Meat.* The backs of cards, before they were stamped as they are now with a uniform pattern, were used for correspondence, and even for advertising circulars.

Then there is fortune-telling—and here, too, the Devil has no monopoly. We found this defence of fortune-telling in a nineteenth-century *Book of Days*, and quote from it without comment :

Few know what the lowest classes in our large towns suffer when assailed by mental affliction. . . . Accustomed to live from hand to mouth, their whole existence is bound up in the present, and they have no idea of the healing effects of time. . . . They know of no future, they think no other human being ever suffered as they do. As they term it themselves, " they are upset." They perceive no resource, no other remedy, than a leap from the nearest bridge. . . . Haply some friend or neighbour, one who has already suffered and been relieved, takes the wretched creature to a fortune-teller. The seeress at once perceives that her client is in distress, and, shrewdly guessing the cause, pretends that she sees it all in the cards. Having thus asserted her superior intelligence, she affords her sympathy and consolation, and points to hope and a happy future ; blessed hope ! though in the form of a greasy playing-card. The sufferer, if not cured, is relieved . . . and in all probability a suicide or a murder is prevented. Scenes of this character occur every day in the meaner parts of London.

The better kinds of fortune-teller still use a tarot pack (the shabbier the better), but it is perfectly possible to tell fortunes with an ordinary modern pack, mint new from the stationers. Although the particular meaning of the cards depends on the age and sex of the one who cuts them, each has a general meaning. The Eight of Diamonds, for instance, is said to mean a happy, prudent marriage, though rather late in life ; the Trey of Hearts means poverty, shame and sorrow, caused by imprudence ; the Six of Spades is a child—N.B. *to the unmarried, a card of caution* !

Looking back through the years, one wonders what has happened to all the games people *used* to play. " I never prospered since I foreswore myself at Primero," says Falstaff. Who plays Primero now, and what were the rules ? Who plays any of the games listed in the little verse with which we began this article ? Who plays Maw, which succeeded Primero as the fashionable game at the English Court, and which was the favourite game of James I ? After Maw came Noddy, which seems to have been an older version of Cribbage, and the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had Ombre and Quadrille. With Whist the history of modern card games begins.

Let India vaunt her children's vast address,
Who first contrived the warlike sport of Chess ;
Let nice Piquette the boast of France remain,
And studious Ombre be the pride of Spain ;
Invention's praise shall England yield to none
When she can call delightful Whist her own.

Whist is with us still, as the myriads of militant old ladies who go regularly to drives in the church hall will attest, and from Whist has come Bridge, and now Bridge is challenged by Canasta, and where it will all end, who knows ? " Who played Bridge ? " they may be asking in the Christmas Number of *The Sketch* of 2156, " and what were its rules ? " Well, not to put too fine a point on it, *we* play it, and the rules are too complicated to explain here. ★ ★ ★

ANSWERS TO THE "SKETCH" QUIZ

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Yes, But Where Is It?

Wiltshire (Stonehenge); Monmouthshire (Tintern Abbey); Westmorland (Windermere); Pembrokeshire (St. David's Cathedral); Worcestershire (Bredon); Warwickshire (Edgehill); Gloucestershire (Forest of Dean).

Trade Marks

(a) *Dunhill lighters;* (b) *Bass beer;* (c) *Courage's ales;* (d) *Player's cigarettes and tobacco;* (e) *Harella clothing;* (f) *Findlater's sherry;* (g) *Ovaltine.*

And Nicknames

Ohio is the Buckeye State; a buckeye is a horse-chestnut.
North Carolina is the Tarheel State; tarheels are the natives of the barren pinelands of North Carolina.
Indiana is the Hoosier State, and "hoosier" means a man from Indiana. It is supposed to be a corruption, but nobody is sure of what, although "Who 's here?" and "Who 's yer?" ("Who are you?") have both been suggested.
South Dakota is the Coyote State; a coyote is a small wolf, living on the prairie.
Texas is the Lone Star State, and so called because Texas was for long an independent State, and only came into the Union in 1845.
Minnesota is the Gopher State; a gopher is a burrowing rodent, the size of a large rat. Anyone who has seen Walt Disney's "The Living Desert" will have grown rather fond of gophers.

Kings and Queens

(a) *Austrian (Marie Antoinette), Portuguese (Henrietta Maria), Danish (King Haakon), Greek (King Carol).*
(b) *Queen Anne died in 1714.*

★

MOTORING

Emergencies

(a) *Prepare to go to the precipice side if it is a mail-carrying coach (white cross marking). These coaches always pass on the inside.*
(b) *Restart the engine if stopped, or operate the starter, to draw the flames into the engine away from harm.*
(c) *Approach to the Blackwall Tunnel.*

Legal Eagles

(a) *Yes: a right turn at a light-controlled cross-roads (when traffic spacing permits a right turn).*
(b) *Yes: only a solo motor-cycle can be driven by a learner alone.*

History

(a) *Choose from these: Brooks, Stanley, Locomobile, Doble, White.*
(b) *"Ensign" car marketed in '20's with "Crown-Magnetic" infinitely variable transmission. Not successful.*
(c) *Austria (Steyr), Holland (Spyker), Sweden (Saab), France and Spain (Hispano-Suiza), Sweden (Volvo), USA (Stearns), USA (Lafayette), Belgium (Minerva).*

Fiction

Lowland, Punic and Hirondelle are fictitious; Panther is a motor-cycle; remainder are genuine old-timers.

Geography

(a) *Gibraltar—keep to the right; Sweden—to the left (recently confirmed by plebiscite); China—to the right (changed by People's Government); Japan—to the left; Pakistan—to the left (change to the right recently rejected by public opinion poll); Vatican City—to the right.*
(b) *Portugal (P), Iceland (IS), Gambia (WAG), Trieste (TS), Trinidad (TD), Monaco (MC), Argentina (RA), Chile (RCH), Ceylon (CL), Cyprus (CY).*
(c) *Oxford Circus is stone-sett.*

★

BOOKS

Noms de Plume

François Marie de Arouet (Voltaire); Major H. C. McNeill (Sapper); C. Day Lewis (Nicholas Blake); Charlotte Brontë (Currer Bell); Captain A. A. Willis (Anthony Armstrong).
Nobody knows who Junius was. Out of a field that has been placed as high as forty, Sir Philip Francis and Lord Temple seem to be the strongest contenders.
Mrs. Paul Dashwood (E. M. Delafield); H. H. Munro (Saki); Dr. O. H. Mavor (James Bridie); Charles Dickens (Boz); Captain C. W. Mercer (Dornford Yates).

Next in Line

"Les Jeunes Filles en Fleurs" is the second book of "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu."
"In Chancery" second book of "The Forsyte Saga."
"Phineas Redux" Trollope's second political novel.
"Love in a Cold Climate" follows "The Pursuit of Love" and "A Buyer's Market" follows "A Question of Upbringing."
"The Reluctant Dragon" follows "The Golden Age."

Childhood Memories

(a) *Ratty in "The Wind in the Willows."*
(b) *Betsy Trotwood in "David Copperfield."*
(c) *Piglet to Pooh during a snowstorm in "The House at Pooh Corner."*
(d) *The Queen of Hearts to almost everybody in "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland."*
(e) *The two mice in Beatrix Potter's "Tailor of Gloucester."*
Finally, the "It" in "Five Children and It" was a psammead or sand fairy.

Jobs for the Boys and Girls

Mrs. Gamp ("Martin Chuzzlewit") was a midwife.
The Reverend Septimus Harding (Trollope's "The Warden") was Warden of Hiram's Hospital.
Mr. Polly (H. G. Wells' "History of Mr. Polly") was in the outfitting trade.
Raskolnikov ("Crime and Punishment") was a student.
Mr. Wackford Squeers ("Nicholas Nickleby") kept a school.
Flurry Knox (E. Œ. Somerville and Martin Ross's "Experiences of an Irish R.M.") was M.F.H.
Charles Bovary (Flaubert's "Madame Bovary") was a country doctor.
Winston Smith (Orwell's "1984") was a clerk in the Ministry of Truth.
Mrs. Danvers (Daphne du Maurier's "Rebecca") was a housekeeper.
Billy Budd (Melville's "Billy Budd") was a sailor.
Mr. Salteena (Daisy Ashford's "The Young Visiters") was almost a gentleman.

★

FOOD AND WINE

Where?

(a) *Chablis from the northernmost vineyards of the old province of Burgundy; Hermitage is made from grapes grown on the slopes of the Hermitage Hill above Tain, opposite Tournon, on the left bank of the Rhône; Muscadet comes from the Loire Valley, west of Nantes; Pouilly Fumé from the upper reaches of the Loire, north of Nevers.*
(b) *Clos de Tart; Châteauneuf du Pape is a Rhône wine; the remainder are Clarets.*
(c) *Bouillabaisse in France, particularly Marseilles: it is a fish soup; Soda bread in Ireland—a griddle-baked bread in which the "lightening" agents are baking soda and buttermilk; Gulyas in Hungary—we know it as goulash; Svestkove knedliky in Czechoslovakia—a kind of dumpling which contains a whole plum; Clam chowder in New England—a thick soup made with clams and milk; Paella in Spain—a kind of pilaf with saffron, with meat, fish or what you will.*

And What?

(a) *Their shape: Gnocchi is ball-shaped; Fettucini, rectangular and flat; Tagliatelli, ribbon-like; Pappardelle is large and Cannelloni rolled. Some kinds of pasta are also regional specialities—e.g., Fettucini is of Rome and Tagliatelli of Bologna.*
(b) *Quetsch, Kümmel and Cassis are liqueurs; Suze and Cinzano are apéritifs; Essence of Tokay is the finest of the wines from the Tokay district of Hungary. It is made from juice that is pressed by their own weight from grapes that are dry on the vine; this matures into a heavy, sweet, liqueur-like wine that will keep almost for ever.*

Snips and Snails and Puppy-dogs' Tails

Champ from potatoes mashed with butter, milk or buttermilk, and seasoning, into which is mixed parsley or chives or the green of spring onions or peas. Weiner Schnitzel is veal (thin slices of a special cut) brushed lightly with beaten egg and coated sparingly with bread-crumbs and cooked in butter. Soubise Lyonnaise is a purée of onions; Ravioli, from pasta stuffed with a mixture of herbs and breadcrumbs or herbs and meat.

THEATRE

Who wrote Shakespeare?

All of them. Of the six names quoted, Francis Bacon Viscount St. Albans, the Earl of Oxford, and (owing to the recent publicity) Christopher Marlowe are the best-known "Shakespeares," but William Stanley, sixth Earl of Derby, Roger Manners, fifth Earl of Rutland, and Lady Pembroke all have had their backers.

Country of Origin

Pirandello (Italy), Pinero (Great Britain), Lorca (Spain), Ibsen (Norway), Miller (USA), Camus (France), Gogol (Russia), Strindberg (Sweden).

Christian Names

William Charles Macready. Richard Burbage. Peg Woffington. Lewis Waller. "Rachel"—a catch question; her real name was Elisa Felix. Edmund Kean. Sarah Bernhardt. Herbert Beerbohm Tree. Harley Granville Barker. Ellen Terry (best-known of all the Terry clan). Tod Slaughter. David Garrick. Colley Cibber. George Alexander.

Facts and Figures

(a) *Theatre Royal, Bristol.*
(b) *The Coliseum has a width of 55 ft. and a depth of 92 ft.*
(c) *Drury Lane.*
(d) *Blackfriars, the Theatre, the Curtain, the Globe and the Rose.*
(e) *Covent Garden, Drury Lane and the Theatre Royal, Haymarket.*

Long Runs

(*number of performances in brackets*)

Chu Chin Chow (2238). Blithe Spirit (1997). Me and My Girl (1646). Together Again (1566). Oklahoma! (1544). Our Boys (1362). The Maid of the Mountains (1352). Arsenic and Old Lace (1337). A Little Bit of Fluff (1241). Quiet Week-End (1059). French Without Tears (1039). Perchance to Dream (1022).

★

FASHION

Furs and Fibres

(a) *Coypu rat (Nutria), Muskrat (Musquash), Lamb (Caracule), Siberian marten (Kolinsky), Chinese ermine (Solongoi).*
(b) *Nylon, Ardil and Taiho are all "man-made."*

Beautiful Scents

Guerlain (L'Heure Bleue), Chanel (No. 5), Fath (Canasta), Balenciaga (Le Dix), Yardley (Bond Street), Hartnell (My Love).

Historically Speaking

(a) *A mediæval head-dress of linen.*
(b) *A very full overskirt falling from a hoop at hip-level, worn in the Elizabethan era.*
(c) *An outdoor over-cloak worn in mediæval times and revived in the eighteenth century.*
(d) *A small whalebone cage worn over the behind under the dress and tied round the waist with tapes. This fashion appeared about 1870.*
Answer to "clocks"—Stockings were originally linen and a laced gusset was placed at the ankle to allow the foot through.

Of National Importance

English (Worth), Spanish (Balenciaga), French (Chanel), Irish (Digby Morton), Irish (Irene Gilbert).

Fashionable Colours

Periwinkle (Pervenche), Mole (Taupe), Red (Coquelicot), Green (Chartreuse).

★

GARDENING

The Name 's Not the Same

(a) *Pelargonium. The real geranium is commonly called "cranesbill";* (b) *Syringa;* (c) *Philadelphus.*

A Change of Climate

(a) *Persia (Tulip); South Africa (Freesia); China (Winter Jasmine).*
(b) *William's.*
(c) *None of them.*

Scent and Sweetness

(a) *Tuberose.*
(b) *Bramley Seedling.*

BY APPOINTMENT TO HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

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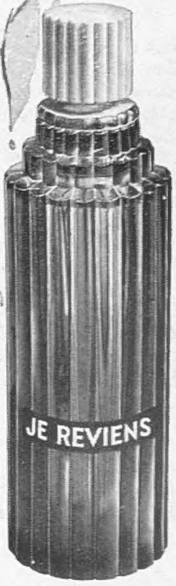
MOËT & CHANDON

CHAMPAGNE

MAISON FONDÉE EN 1743

DRY IMPERIAL
Vintage 1949
and
PREMIÈRE CUVÉE
Non-Vintage



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CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

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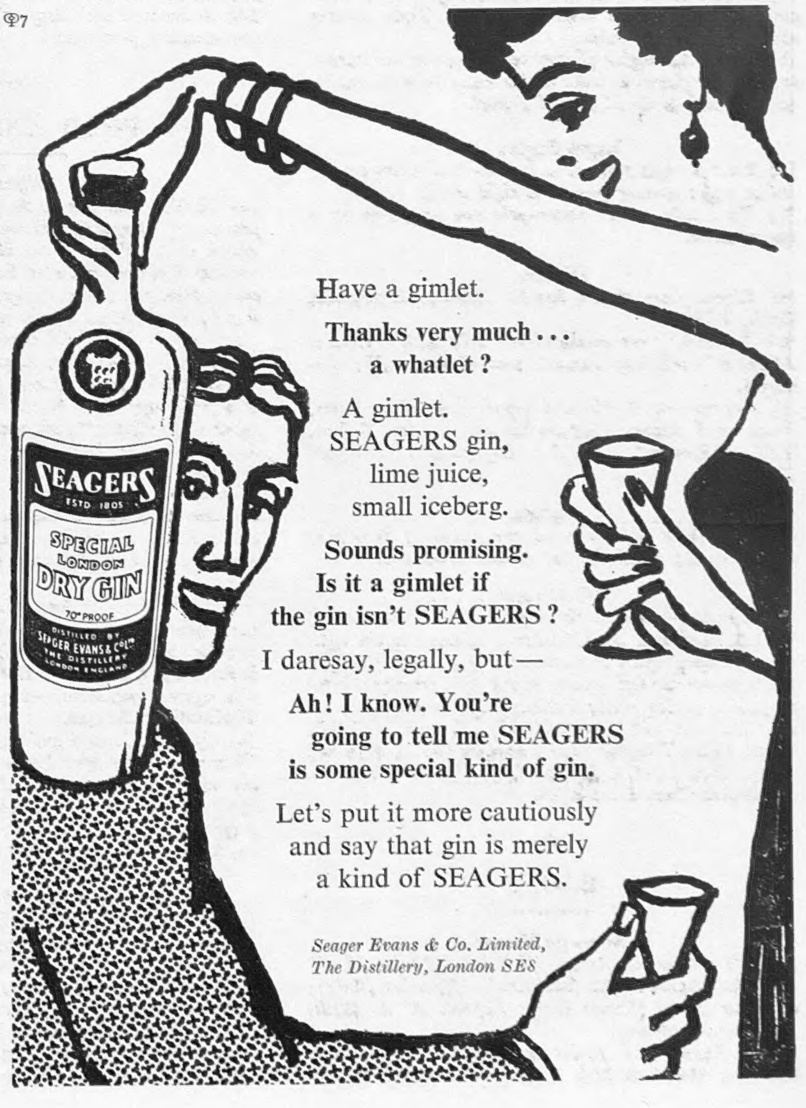
Old Town Hall, Kennington, London, S.E.11



Have a gimlet.

Thanks very much . . . a whatlet?

A gimlet. SEAGERS gin, lime juice, small iceberg.

Sounds promising. Is it a gimlet if the gin isn't SEAGERS?

I daresay, legally, but—

Ah! I know. You're going to tell me SEAGERS is some special kind of gin.

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Lady Rose McLaren, who is the sister of George Charles Henry Victor Paget, 7th Marquis of Anglesey, and the widow of the Hon. John Francis McLaren, son of Baron Aberconway, pauses for well-earned refreshment before signalling 'on with the fun.' Grateful daughter Harriet pours her mother's favourite brew,* while Victoria waves her magic wand over the teapot.

* *The "favourite brew" of course is Brooke Bond "Choicest." Because it's always fresh. Because it's readily available from the grocer. And because they really like it best.*

And as a Christmas present which is fun and different but in *faultlessly* good taste, what about a chest of Brooke Bond 'Choicest'? No, don't panic, we're not suggesting you buy a whole crate. This little Christmas 'tea-chest' contains four ¼ lb. packets of tea. No charge is made for the special packing. Order *now* from your grocer.

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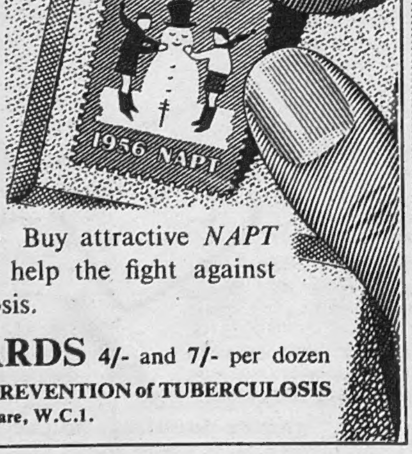

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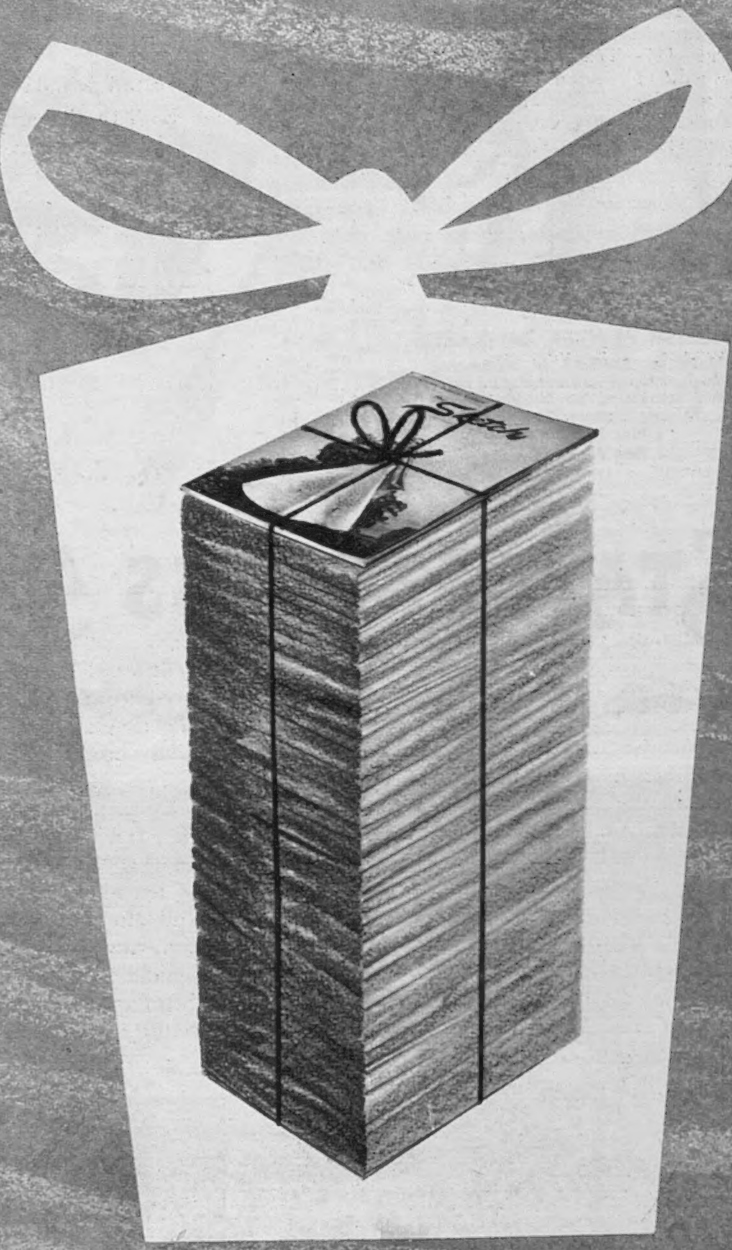

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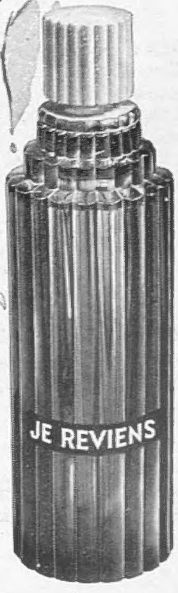

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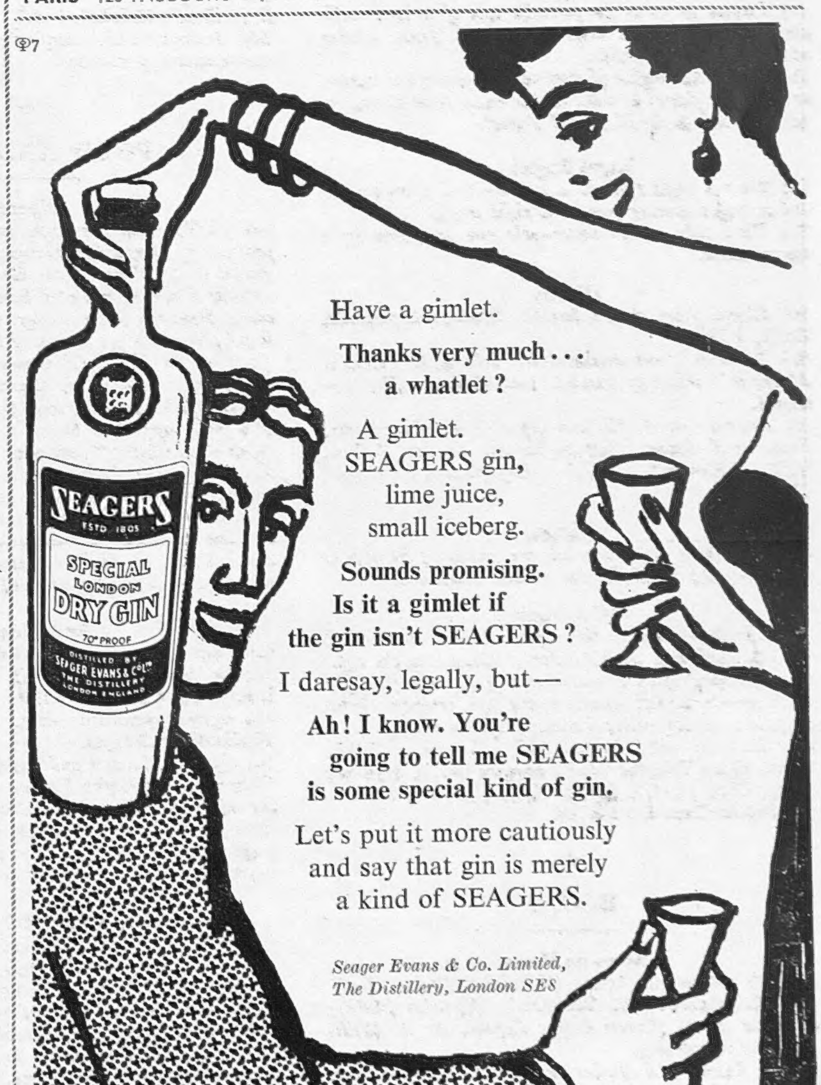
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